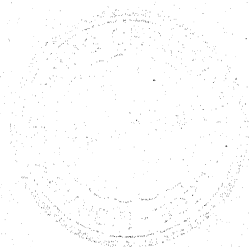


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# WHAT THE CROSS MEANS TO ME

*A Theological Symposium*

## CONTRIBUTORS:

HAROLD E. BRIERLEY

C. J. CADOUX

D. R. DAVIES

BEDE FROST

A. E. GARVIE

JOHN A. HUGHES

EVGHENY LAMPERT

H. D. A. MAJOR

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

CONRAD NOEL

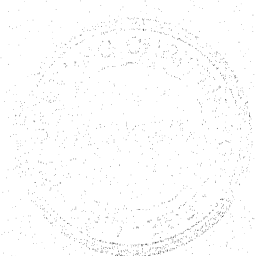
RICHARD ROBERTS

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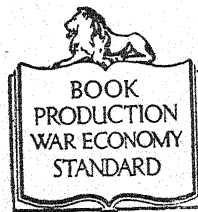
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JAMES CLARKE & CO. LTD.  
5, WARDROBE PLACE, CARTER LANE,  
LONDON, E.C.4

*First published 1943*



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*Made and printed in Great Britain by  
The Camelot Press Limited, London and Southampton*

## FOREWORD

IT is surely a strange and significant fact that while it is universally agreed that to cut the Cross out of the Christian story would be to take the heart out of the Christian religion, yet even the most authoritarian of Churches have refrained from propounding an official doctrine of the Atonement. While the Churches have not been slow to pronounce upon the Person of Christ, no Church has had the temerity to officially enunciate a doctrine of the Death of Christ. Theories there have always been in abundance, for the spectacle of "that strange man upon His Cross" has intrigued and fascinated men far beyond the confines of any organized Church or religious belief, and will doubtless continue to do so until the very end of time.

Perhaps an element of mystery is inescapable in this connexion. Calvary answers to something in the experience of man that refuses to be confined to mere words.

Forty years ago the present publishers issued a volume with the title *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, which had a considerable circulation and went through two impressions. The present volume is an attempt to record the thinking of the intervening years, but with one essential difference. In the earlier book the contributors were mainly well-known preachers, and, as perhaps was to be expected, were nearly all of the liberal school of thought. They were also, with a few exceptions, all members of one religious communion. Such well-remembered names as Silvester Horne, R. F. Horton, John Hunter, Bernard Snell, Marcus Dodds and P. T. Forsyth figure in the pages, while Deans Farrar and W. H. Freemantle represent the Anglicans, and Adolf Harnack, Auguste Sabatier and Frederic Godet the Continental thinkers.

The plan of the present volume differs somewhat from its predecessor. In the first place, the contributors have been deliberately selected from widely divergent schools of thought. It is a particular pleasure to include essays by members of both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions. Then the book is by no means confined to contributions by well-known preachers. Theological professors, working parsons and laymen all have a share in the work. Moreover, the essayists are not all confined to

a single generation of religious thinkers. The names of some of the writers will be household words to many readers, while others will possibly be unknown. Yet each seems to us qualified by learning or by practical experience to contribute something of value to the discussion.

It is a matter of deep regret that Miss Evelyn Underhill passed away before she had completed her promised essay.

The essays are printed in alphabetical order under the names of their contributors.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### I

*HAROLD E. BRIERLEY* was for many years minister of the well-known Highbury Quadrant Congregational Church, and later pastor of Emmanuel Church, Southbourne. The latter church was built during his ministry, and marks a distinct turning point in Nonconformist church architecture. He is the Author of two distinguished volumes of sermons, *LIFE INDEED* and *FREEDOM AND FAITH*.

Mr. Brierley's father was the famous "J. B." whose weekly articles in *The Christian World* were eagerly read by a wide public of all denominations.

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### 2

*CECIL JOHN CADOUX, M.A., D.D., D.Litt.,* is Mackennal Professor of Church History and Vice-Principal at Mansfield College, Oxford. He is the author of a number of books on religious and kindred subjects, including *THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS, THE CASE FOR EVANGELICAL MODERNISM, THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO WAR, ANCIENT SMYRNA,* etc.

Dr. Cadoux was formerly professor of New Testament Criticism, Exegesis and Theology, and Christian Sociology at Yorkshire United Independent College.

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### 3

*DAVID RICHARD DAVIES* is a native of South Wales. As a boy and youth he worked in a coal-pit. He gained entrance to United College, Bradford, and studied Arts at Edinburgh University, where he specialized in Economics and Philosophy. After returning to United College for Theology, he served for twelve years as a Congregational minister.

Mr. Davies has taken a prominent part in left-wing politics and journalism. He contested Lancaster in the Labour interest at a bye-election in 1928, after which he resigned from the ministry and went

to London, where he suffered a period of unemployment and acute poverty. After a spell of political and journalistic activities, during which he edited the weekly *New Britain*, he returned to the Congregational ministry at Richmond Road, Cardiff.

In 1939 he published *ON TO ORTHODOXY*, which attracted a good deal of attention both here and in the United States. This was followed in 1940 by a book entitled *THE TWO HUMANITIES*.

Mr. Davies has recently taken orders in the Church of England, and was ordained priest by the Archbishop of York in June 1941.

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## 4

BEDE FROST is an Oblate of the Benedictine Order (Anglican). After some years in an industrial parish in the Midlands, he had extensive missionary experience in Australia, the Philippine Islands, Fiji and Assam. Since his return to England he has been mainly engaged in preaching, giving retreats and writing. He is the Author of *THE ART OF MENTAL PRAYER* and many other volumes of a devotional character.

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## 5

ALFRED ERNEST GARVIE, M.A., D.D., D.Th., is a former principal of Hackney and New Colleges, and has made a distinguished contribution through his many books to theological learning in this country and abroad.

Dr. Garvie was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1920, President of the National Free Church Council in 1923, and Moderator of the Federal Council of Free Churches in 1928. He has taken a deep interest in the ecumenical movement, and was deputy Chairman of the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927.

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## 6

JOHN ARMSTRONG HUGHES was educated at Durham Cathedral Choir School, and after a period as a schoolmaster was ordained, and became in turn Succentor at Leeds Parish Church, a Minor Canon of Ely, and for some time Vicar-Choral of York.

In 1921 he was appointed Warden of St. Mary's Settlement,

York, and afterwards joined the Society of Friends. He did not, however, abandon his Anglican orders on becoming a Quaker. In 1940 he delivered the annual Swarthmore Lecture of the Society of Friends, which was entitled *THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN A PAGAN WORLD*.

In 1932 John Hughes became Warden of Pendle Hill Settlement, Philadelphia. Returning to England two years later, he gave his time thereafter to speaking, lecturing and leading study groups in the North of England. He died in 1942 shortly after completing the essay in this volume.

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## 7

EVGHENY LAMPERT is a young Russian Orthodox layman. He left Russia after the Revolution and completed his education in Berlin. Proceeding in 1930 to Strasbourg University, he was brought for the first time face to face with the claims of religion, and as a consequence he underwent a complete change of outlook and transferred from the faculty of Philosophy to that of Theology. After taking his degree, M. Lampert continued his studies at the Russian Orthodox Theological Academy at Paris. Shortly before the war he came to England, and is now working at the University of Oxford.

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## 8

HENRY DEWSBURY ALVES MAJOR, D.D., F.S.A., is the Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford (since 1919). He is the founder and editor of *The Modern Churchman* (founded 1911), and a Vice-President of the Modern Churchmen's Union.

Dr. Major is widely recognized as a leader of the modernist movement in the Church of England. He has written *THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM*, *JESUS BY AN EYE-WITNESS*, *ENGLISH MODERNISM*, *THE CHURCH'S CREEDS AND MODERN MAN*, and other works from the modernist standpoint, and is part author of the recently published *MESSAGE AND MISSION OF JESUS*.

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## 9

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY, author and critic, is widely known as one of the most versatile of living English men of letters. At

*one time editor of The Athenæum, and founder and editor of The Adelphi, in recent years he has taken a prominent part in the pacifist movement.*

*Mr. Murry's many publications include FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY, COUNTRIES OF THE MIND, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, LIFE OF JESUS, THE NECESSITY FOR COMMUNISM, THE NECESSITY FOR PACIFISM, THE BETRAYAL OF CHRIST BY THE CHURCHES. He is an Anglican layman.*

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## 10

*CONRAD NOEL, the Christian Socialist Vicar of Thaxted, is widely known for his LIFE OF JESUS and numerous books and propaganda pamphlets. A tireless critic of existing social institutions and of ecclesiastical vested interests and obscurantisms, he has made his lovely country church a place of pilgrimage for many who seek a beautiful and colourful ceremonial and village community life.*

*Fr. Noel passed away while this volume was in the press.*

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## 11

*RICHARD ROBERTS, D.D., D.Litt., was well known in England as a Presbyterian minister before he went to America. He held pastorates in New York, Montreal and Toronto, before entering the United Church of Canada at the consummation of the union in 1925, becoming Moderator of the Church in 1934-6.*

*The subject of this symposium has been one of the main preoccupations of Dr. Roberts' literary life, and most of his published works centre round the Cross of Christ and its implications for our time. Dr. Roberts was lecturer in Theology at Emmanuel College, Toronto, 1929-32.*

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## 12

*HENRY WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A., D.D., is Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford, and Examiner in Theology to the universities of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Wales and Oxford, and in Hebrew in Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds and Oxford.*



*Dr. Robinson was previously Professor of Church History and the Philosophy of Religion at Rawdon College (1906-20). He is a Past President of the Society for Old Testament Study, and the Oxford Society for Historical Theology, and the author of numerous books mainly on Old Testament subjects. He is a Baptist.*

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13

*VICTOR WHITE is a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, and a member of Order of Preachers (Dominicans). He has studied at the Pontifical University of Valladolid (Spain), the Institut Supérieure de Philosophie at Louvain and also in the theological faculty at Louvain University, as well as at the two English Dominican Houses at Hawkesyard and Oxford. He was Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Blackfriars, Oxford, from 1933 to 1940, and was assistant Editor of the Dominican quarterly, Blackfriars, from 1934 to 1940.*

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14

*CHARLES WILLIAMS is on the London staff of the Oxford University Press. He is the author of HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN and THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE, but is better known by his novels (among which are THE PLACE OF THE LION and DESCENT INTO HELL), by critical books (THE ENGLISH POETIC MIND and REASON AND BEAUTY IN THE POETIC MIND) and by his poetry. The last volume of this called TALIESSIN IN LOGRES was published in 1938; it is to be followed by other poems on the same subject. Mr. Williams is also the author of the Canterbury play, THOMAS CRANMER OF CANTERBURY, and of the Nativity play, SEED OF ADAM, besides other plays which have been produced by the Oxford Company of the Pilgrim Players.*

*Mr. Williams is a communicant of the Church of England.*

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15

*CHARLES JAMES WRIGHT, B.D., Ph.D., is lecturer in the History of Doctrine in the University of Manchester, and Professor of Systematic Theology in Didsbury and Hartley Victoria*

*Colleges, Manchester. Dr. Wright is a frequent contributor to The Hibbert Journal, The London Quarterly Review, The Modern Churchman, The Expository Times and other journals. Prior to Methodist Union, he was a minister of the Wesleyan connexion.*

*Dr. Wright's published works include MIRACLE IN HISTORY AND MODERN THOUGHT, THE MEANING AND MESSAGE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL, and MODERN ISSUES IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. He was also part-author of THE MISSION AND MESSAGE OF JESUS.*

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# I

HAROLD E. BRIERLEY

I BEGIN by saying that I take the word "Cross" here throughout as the symbol of the doctrine of the Atonement.

The title of this book inevitably raises the issue of subjectivism—and, incidentally, of authority—in religion. Does it matter what the atonement means *to me*? And if so, how much? With the right of private judgment increasingly challenged in "these darkening days of religious timidity and reaction" by the emergence of the new theological authoritarianism (whose suspicious contemporaneity with the new political authoritarianism which is menacing the whole world to-day, gives it a more sinister aspect) the question is of vital importance for us all. Twenty years ago Dean Inge told us confidently that the centre of gravity in religion was rapidly passing from authority to experience: a process which Archbishop Frederick Temple had declared to be inevitable to theology more than fifty years before.

But when to-day "authority" boldly claims that honest deviation from traditional theology is "not heresy but unbelief," it behoves us to re-examine the foundations of belief with fresh clarity of thought and fidelity to the truth as we see it. For as the late Dr. John Oman pertinently says in his last and very important book, *Honest Religion*—a book for which honest theology has been waiting for a long time—"In religion we must be as bold, as free, as honest, as prepared to face all realities, as in science or philosophy. Slavery to tradition, fear of enquiry, submission to institutions are not religion, but the want of it, not faith but unbelief." Oman not only makes a dignified and much-needed protest against "the many who have found justification for intolerance and persecution in the assurance that honest conviction is their peculiar possession," but contends that Christianity to-day is suffering from a refusal—in effect, a fear—to bear the responsibilities of freedom: and adds, suggestively, that "in life it is very seldom that the way through is the way back." *O si sic omnes!* It is the freedom itself rather than the explorations of freedom that is banned and fatally condemned *a priori* to-day. The cost of this

popular defeatism may easily prove far more disastrous than any of the errors that are likely to be revealed in the pursuit of freedom itself.

It is important at the outset to realize that there is no uniform doctrine of atonement in the Bible.

*Quod semper quod ubique* was never true. It was not true of the New Testament, where at least three differing Christologies are clearly discernible, and where Peter found some things in his brother Paul hard of understanding and doubtless of acceptance. It was not true of Clement of Alexandria and Irenæus: it was not true of Origen and Tertullian: it was not true of Bernard and Abelard. It will never be true. In every branch of theology, in our investigations into the origins of the New Testament, in our reactions to the divergent developments of New Testament doctrine, the foundations of belief are always two-fold—the facts as far as they can be ascertained and the medium by which the facts are transmitted and apprehended. As a primary psychological fact nothing can be objective—for us—that is not first subjective. And I unhesitatingly accept the claim that “no truth is of any value to the individual until he has found it in and for himself. All other knowledge is no more than learning by rote.” Whatever the claims of authority may be, the final test must always be with the soul that accepts the authority. Whether that soul be Catholic or Protestant, that is always an act of individual judgment and will. And it should not be without significance to those for whom the Pauline theology is fundamental and apparently final for the Christian faith that, roughly, for 300 years after the apostolic era the trend of Christian theology was largely Greek and not Latin, that the best thinking of the Christian Church was predominantly Johannine and not Pauline and that the Pauline theology suffered relative eclipse until the time of Augustine.

The attempt has recently been made in Bishop Aulén's *Christus Victor* to trace the “classic theory” of the Atonement back through Irenæus to Paul and to rehabilitate Luther as the Reformation bulwark of the “classic theory.” But if Paul was not crucified for me, still less was Luther. And for my part it suffices that in his Commentary on Galatians Luther enlarges on “the curse which is the wrath of God against the whole world,” and, elsewhere, speaks of “the liberty with which Christ makes us free” as “freedom from the everlasting wrath of God,” to dismiss the Lutheran theory (whatever its relation to the “classic” theory of the atonement

may be) as being definitely sub-Christian, indeed as having no basis in Christianity, as I understand it, at all. It is merely a relic of that paganism in religion which Christ came to rebuke and destroy. With such a wholly Old Testament conception of God it is not surprising that Luther declared the Thirty Years' War: but it would be surprising, even in these chaotic days, if we invited Luther to declare another thirty years' war in the field of theology and the domain of the spirit. "One is your Master, even Christ." And neither Luther nor Calvin is any more authoritative for us than is the Athanasian Creed, except as receding mile-stones on the far path behind. "When He, the spirit of truth is come, He shall lead you into all the truth." Did the Holy Spirit cease to function in the fifth century or the fifteenth? We need our Leader ahead of us and not behind us. The greatest disservice that the whole trend of traditional theology has done to religion is its grievous neglect of the implications of the true doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There the Quakers have much to teach us.

"To all this historic range of thought," Aulén himself observes, "retributive justice stands out as the primary attribute of God. The idea of God which underlies it [the Reformation doctrine] is above all that of justice which imposes its law and demands satisfaction: only within these limits is the Divine Love allowed to operate, and there is a suggestion that the idea of Divine Love is regarded with some suspicion as though it needed to be watched, lest it should infringe the demands of justice."

What need have we of further witness? Though it is not enough to dismiss a theory as obsolete and, therefore, negligible as long as our children are still taught to sing "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin"—a statement that definitely implies a doctrine of the atonement which in its extreme form represented "the price of sin" as being paid to the devil—as Dr. Major has recently pointed out. On the other hand, it is difficult to sustain the claim for any "classic" theory at all in view of the affirmation of Hastings Rashdall in his *Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* that "Abelard's theory of the Atonement is entirely in line with the earlier tradition of the Church." And Abelard's theory is summed up thus: "He sees that God can only be supposed to forgive by making the sinner better: and thereby removing any idea of punishment." "He *died* to make us good." In other words, that Christian salvation is, in essence, quite distinct from any theory of substitutionary or vicarious atonement:

and that reconciliation *is* salvation. Salvation being man's new and true relation to God in Christ: and not God's new relation to man in any sense whatever.

It is noteworthy and wholly relevant to remark, in passing, that in Aulén's able and impartial little book, whilst the author, in pursuit of the "classic theory" of the Atonement, passes in review "the Pauline theory," "The Teaching of Hebrews" and of "The Rest of the New Testament," and the views of the Fathers, Anselm, Luther and the Middle Ages, he has not a single page or line on the teaching of Jesus Himself. And that, in a word, is the crux of the complaint that many of us have against the traditional theory of the Atonement. What did *Jesus* teach as to the forgiveness of sins? For *that* is what the Atonement means "to me."

Now, in approaching this vital question I find it entirely impossible to continue to *partition* the mission of Jesus: specifically, to distinguish His death from His life—for this is what traditional theories have fatally tended to do. For the mission of Jesus is a unity, an indivisible Whole, in life and death inseparably one. Whatever His life means, His death means, and His death can have no significance apart from His life: that is, apart from the Incarnation, regarded as a whole. He did not live in order to die: He died in order to live more fully and universally and the more completely to express the meaning of His life. Christ is all of a piece. Indeed, Thomas à Kempis illustrates this simple but profound fact (though from an entirely different angle) when he says in the *Imitatio*—"The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom." And in a very real sense, though not at all in the morbid sense so seemingly inseparable from the Catholic doctrine of the Cross—which fails to see the Conqueror and only finds the Victim in it—that was true. So to grasp the true unity of Christ, to the death of Christ we must add the resurrection (whatever the *modus* of it): for the persistence of the essential Christ beyond death is as much implicit in His life as in His death. We are not immortal because Christ rose from the dead. Christ rose from the dead because He—and we—are immortal. So St. Paul: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." It is the Cross—the vacant, triumphant Cross, all the ignominy and defeat of it transformed by the radiant glory of the Resurrection and not the crucifix, laden with the body of a dead and lacerated man—that is the true symbol of Christianity and the "sign" by which it conquers.



The death was inevitable to it, but was neither the end of it, nor the sum of it. Christ is one Whole, in life, death and resurrection the same. He did not come to die for us in any more valid or decisive sense than that in which He came to live for us, "and rose again for our justification" (i.e. reconciliation, at-one-ment with God). We are not saved by the death of Christ, but by *Christ*, "the *same* yesterday, to-day and forever," in life and death and life beyond death, one and indivisible. The traditional view seems almost to imply that death itself for Jesus was, in some way, almost abnormal. But for Jesus, who was physically mortal (or not a man) death was entirely natural and inevitable. Death was a part of His human life. If this had not been the case, His triumph over death would have been meaningless and valueless to us. When Christ spoke of His approaching death it was predominantly with an unshrinking calm, even with exultation. It was the finish of (not something apart from) "the work" His Father had given Him to do. As the River, which had been long in sight, was reached there is the sound of "all the trumpets" in the thrilling words, "I have finished my work." Length of years could not have added to it. That "the work" of Christ was not only a linked sequence but a single whole is involved in any logical or convincing sense of the word "Incarnation." To separate Christ's death from His life, or to give it any interpretation apart from His life, is to throw the basic doctrine of the Incarnation entirely out of perspective. Nowhere in His teaching does Christ refer to His death as essential to salvation from sin as distinct from the mission of His whole life as lived and offered for the salvation of the whole man. "The Son of Man is come to give His *life* as a ransom for many": not only His death, but His death as part and climax of His life. "Offered for the salvation of the whole man," I say, because man is a great deal more to God than his sins: and I heartily agree with Dr. Jacks, who says somewhere that whereas to the traditional theology God's chief interest in man is almost wholly concerned with his sins, it may well be that God Himself has a very different point of view.

Christian theology has always—mistakenly as I think—laid its chief emphasis on Christ as the Victim of the Cross, rather than on Christ as the Victor over the Cross. The early disciples saw in the Cross nothing but defeat until the tremendous significance of the Resurrection burst with its transforming and revivifying light upon them. It was the Resurrection that was the key-note of

the earliest Christianity—the secret of eternal life in Christ.

In sum, then, the whole of Christ's mission—His "work," as He puts it Himself—is the Atonement. And since the part is not greater than the whole, it follows that the Atonement must take its place in the scheme of the Incarnation as a whole, and can have no other meaning than the Incarnation itself, viz. the at-one-ment of God and man; or as Bishop Westcott so confidently insisted, "The Incarnation *is* the Atonement." And the root significance of it in Christ, both in life and death, was the declaration of the infinite, exhaustless, inalienable compassion of God towards men, of God's love to the uttermost, even to the Cross, death at its hardest and worst. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son"—on those crucial and imperishable words is based the whole philosophy of the Christian faith. He gave His *Son*—not His Son's death, but His *Son*—that whosoever believeth in *Him* . . . It follows, therefore, that redemption, from first to last, is entirely the work of God. Christ's work in salvation is wholly restricted to its effect upon man, and no word of His can be quoted that implies any change in God's relation to man wrought by the work of Christ at all. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," or as Paul says in a terse but all-comprehending phrase, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"—not being reconciled, or satisfied or placated—but reconciling. Dr. D. S. Cairns says very truly and cogently: "The New Testament nowhere asserts that Christ reconciled God to man, which would inevitably imply a fatal moral dualism between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity, which leads inevitably to practical polytheism." And what is worse, to practical atheism—not a theoretical disbelief in the being of God, but to despair of the love of God, which it was the supreme "work" of Christ to declare and to manifest.

It is not possible to adduce a single authentic word of Christ's in regard to sin and forgiveness which is in conflict with this view: whereas innumerable recorded words of Christ support it. E.g. "Whether is *easier* (to 'the Son of man who hath power on earth to forgive sins') to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say 'Arise and walk?'" "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. . . . For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will forgive you your trespasses." It is clear that, in spite of all the gratuitous complications that traditional theology has introduced into



soteriology, to Christ forgiveness was in no way difficult to God. "No one was ever so sure as Jesus of the Father's unlimited and unconditional forgiveness" (Oman). "Whether is *easier* . . . ?" If such words do not mean what they say, it is our right to require of traditionalism to make clear to us what they do mean: and how otherwise they can be explained or explained away, and on what grounds any other authority is to be substituted for the authority of Christ Himself. All this may seem to be very jejune to the inherited mystery complex of the theological mind, but what if it be part of the "simplicity that is in Christ," as it must be if it is Christ's own teaching? Or is the conspiracy to ignore the definite and unequivocal teaching of Christ Himself about forgiveness to go on for ever, or until the world finally despairs of ever recovering *Him* from the grave-clothes of tradition? Even the much-debated word "ransom," in its two isolated appearances in the Synoptics (in the Greek *lutron*, from the root *luo*, to liberate) need mean no more than that the Son of Man is come to give His life (His living and dying, both) as a *liberation* for many. In which sense no more glorious and comforting and experientially true words were ever spoken, even by Christ.

I am, therefore, not disposed to apologise for, but rather eagerly to affirm, my whole-hearted adherence to the "moral theory" of the Atonement. For to be perfectly frank, the chief objection to all the alternative views (save that of Abelard, which unfortunately gained no acceptance with the mediæval Church) that have successively followed each other in the line of traditional theology down to the 19th century, is that they are simply not moral. However pruned and modified and "explained," they are basically identical, in that they revolt the moral consciousness. "The theology of the future will have to be more ethical. No theology which does not accord with the deepest moral consciousness will endure," as Prof. C. J. Wright says. And it is my sincere belief that the *moral* revolt against traditional views has had more to do with the increasing alienation of our age from doctrinal Christianity than any other factor of belief. I am asked here to write what I believe, and I believe this with absolute and deepening conviction. And in spite of certain reactionary, transcendentalist tendencies in current theology (acutely attributed by Dr. Selbie to post-war German defeatist neurosis), I am confident that there are still multitudes of loyal and earnest Christians, both within and without the Churches, who will be glad to have this said on their

behalf. In sum, in my reading of the Gospels I do not find anything at all in the teaching of Jesus Himself that bears out—or even bears upon—the “classic” theory of the atonement. And if Jesus did not understand the true theology of forgiveness, who matters? But we still have to face the fact of the Pauline teaching. The genesis of the Pauline theory of the atonement is surely self-evident. There is no theory of the atonement in the Gospels. Jesus never explained Himself. He affirmed Himself. His self-consciousness (which is only another word for His God-consciousness) was His sole and final authority. “Was Paul crucified for you?” But Paul had to explain Jesus. And nothing can be more certain than that his clear vision of the Cross as a stumbling-block to the Jews was due to the fact that at the outset the Cross had been the supreme stumbling-block to Paul himself. In all the rapture of his new and mystical devotion to the person of Christ he found himself confronted by the perplexing mystery of the Cross. It was not the Cross that first arrested Paul in his relation to Jesus. It was the living Christ Himself. “Declared the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.” That is where Paul began. Yet this glorious and dynamic conviction lay under the haunting curse of “him that hangeth upon a tree.” How could the tremendous contradiction between the triumph of the Prince of life and the humiliation of a felon’s death be reconciled? This was the first dilemma with which Paul, the traditionalist Jew, was faced when he began to think out his new position, a dilemma which has no perplexity, or even meaning, for us. It is not always sufficiently realized that Paul approached the problem of the Cross of Christ from an entirely different point of view from our own. What was more natural—since the dilemma could not be evaded—than that he should fall back on the hereditary theories with which his mind was saturated and endeavour to explain the Cross in terms of the Jewish system of sacrifice?

It is true that, little by little, Paul escaped from the obsession both of Jewish terminology and ideology. It is clear that the great Apostle began his Christian course with a heavy incubus of later Jewish Apocalypticism. This is evident in the early Epistles to the Thessalonians with their crudely materialistic conception of resurrection and their complete outfit of Millenarianism. In his last letter, to the Philippians, however, when he himself was “about to be offered,” Paul appears to have shed the whole of this obsolete framework—the literal descent of Christ, the physical resurrection

of the saints and their levitation into the air to meet the descending Lord—and to be content with the sublime spiritual simplicity of “going to be with Christ which is far better.”

Again, his contact with Greek thought and his magnificent conception of the universality of the Gospel of Christ had led Paul far from the prevailing Jewish—and indeed primitive Christian—conception of the Messiahship of Jesus, a conception entirely alien from and incomprehensible to current Greek thought and an insuperable barrier to the Greek acceptance of the Gospel: so the traditional connotation of the word “Messiah” soon drops out of the swiftly-expanding Christian message. But Paul never escaped from the connotations of the Jewish sacrificial system, the idea of the scape-goat and of substitution and expiation. I know this has been much disputed and that Paul was not always self-consistent, but I do not see how, in any impartial study of Paul’s doctrine of the Atonement, this conclusion can be avoided. Yet I think it may truly be said that whilst Paul was by no means wholly consistent in his exposition of the doctrine of the Cross, he was wholly consistent in regard to what was, for him, the basic foundation both of his faith and of his life—of his Christianity as distinct from his theology—“Christ declared the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead,” “Christ in you the hope of glory.” He preached Christ crucified, but with the Resurrection life flooding his veins, he would have preached Christ any how. When Paul went to Athens what was his Gospel? “He preached Jesus and the resurrection.” Was Paul then concealing “the foolishness of the Cross,” from these critical Greeks? By no means. If the Cross had been the starting-point of Christianity he would have said so. He was summarizing in a single phrase the all-inclusive essence of his Gospel—life in Christ.

Paul *began*, then, with Christ as the Son of God, risen from the dead: and, apart from that beginning, he would never have persisted. “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” It was about that that Paul’s faith and life centred. By that he lived and by that he died. The dynamic centre of his life was Christ in experience, to which all Christological theories were secondary: the theories might be revised, the experience never. In a word, Paul was a mystic by nature, a theologian by necessity. It is just as well to remember that “the third heaven” of 2 Cor. xii. 1-4 is quite as Pauline as the seventh chapter of Romans.

So even for Paul Christianity is primarily the Gospel of life in

Christ: and in that which was the rock foundation of his own regenerate life he came much closer to the Johannine doctrine than in some parts of the structure that he built upon it. And, therefore, for Paul as well as for John, Christianity is the Gospel of the Incarnation in which immortality is implicit and of which the theory of the Atonement is a secondary issue, however important, except in the sense that "the Incarnation is the at-onement." Christ is God's forgiveness: the Cross is God forgiving to the uttermost. "For if way to a better there be, it exacts a full sight of the worst"—even for God, supremely for God, who was "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Life in Christ! There is nothing outside that: nothing beyond that: everything that is authentically Christian is included in it. It is essential Christianity.

As Professor C. J. Wright says in his admirable little book, *Modern Issues in Religious Thought*, "Christ's own teaching on sin and forgiveness arises out of His teaching about God: it is not, let us note, that His teaching on God arises out of a theory of sin." Let us note it well: for it is urgently and crucially true. It seems to me to be a truth not only fundamental to any convincing theory of the Atonement, but also one which exemplifies the cardinal error of much of the soteriological bias of traditional doctrine. So much of our orthodox teaching about salvation does *not* begin with God, but with a certain conception of man, regarded as "fallen": and its conception of God's relation to the world (as was the case with Luther), is always made to conform with its prior conception of man. Christ's teaching about sin and forgiveness begins, ends and is wholly conditioned by His doctrine of God. And this, it seems to me, inevitably marks a crucial distinction between the teaching of Paul and Jesus. In the matter of sin and forgiveness Jesus never mentioned the "Fall," with its supposedly inherited curse, either directly or by implication. Paul's doctrine of salvation may be said to have begun with it. But Paul, from the beginning, was hampered by a very definitely Manichæan theory of evil, as is evidenced by his conception of an irreconcilable hostility between matter and spirit, body and soul—"For in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"—a view that is psychologically, and even medically, impossible to us to-day. "The dualism of mind and body has broken down," says Sir Wm. Langdon-Brown. The teaching of Christ is entirely free from it. "Why are we alive if not to change body into soul?" Where

had we heard it before? "I am come that ye might have life . . . more abundantly": not the repudiation of the life that now is, but its higher fulfilment and glorification. That is Christ's definition of Himself and of Christian salvation. Salvation is, therefore, a process and we are only being saved. Traditional theology, regarding "sin" as an inherited curse, begins by condemning and blasting the sinner. "Jesus, when He saw the multitudes had compassion on them, being as sheep not having a shepherd." He did not condemn them, He pitied them. Christ did not spell "sin" with a capital "S." He began by concerning Himself *not* with "sin" in the abstract and as an antecedent general condition, but with the particular sins of the individual sinner and by liberating the sinner by discharging *his* sins. "*Thy* sins are forgiven thee: arise and walk." The Anglican Prayer Book to this day opens its Service of Baptism by affirming that the child was "conceived and born in sin"—a statement which, while inseparable from the traditional theory of the Atonement, is a sheer relic of Manichæism, and at once a stigma on all parenthood and a libel on childhood. No one really believes it: no Christian has a right to believe it, for Jesus said of little children, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." But nothing could be more symptomatic of the deep gulf between the teaching of Jesus Himself and the bias of traditional dogma.

Furthermore, *all* the teaching of Jesus arises out of His teaching about God. And this teaching about God bases and centres upon the Fatherhood of God: and any doctrine that does not arise from or is not in harmony with our Lord's fundamental declaration about God, is not really Christian at all. And the universal Fatherhood of God of necessity implies the universality of the Sonship of humanity. Adoptionism, in any sense or disguise, is a mere legal fiction. You cannot create sonship: you can only inherit it. You can make good sons out of bad sons, but you cannot make sons out of not-sons. The Prodigal did not begin in the far country: he came home, he came back where he belonged. The Parable of the Prodigal Son may not be a compendium of Christian theology: but if it does not mean that, it does not mean anything at all.

Apart from the universal and inalienable Fatherhood of God and its inevitable corollary, I can see no logical or convincing reason why God should concern Himself with humanity at all—the fatal weakness of the Barthian System. "God so loved the world. . . ." *Why?* There can be only one possible answer: and that

alone is why. To God the incarnation of Christ and the climax of the Cross were inevitable, not merely to the "Eternal purpose," but equally, and more deeply still, to the Eternal Nature. "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world," the Cross was in the heart of God from the beginning—before sin and even before man. The Cross was not an afterthought, a theological device, for the redemption of a world gone wrong, but the "Sign"—at once of a divine principle and its supreme historic manifestation, at Calvary—by which God is ever lifting this sad, errant and struggling world out of nature's darkness into His own marvellous light. And this introduces us to an aspect of the whole problem worthy of a much fuller development than I have space for here, viz., that the doctrine of the Atonement, in its completeness, opens up the vital question of the fundamental and inalienable relation of God to humanity. The Cross did not begin at Calvary: God did not begin to be "Love" at Bethlehem. "I am the Lord: I change not." Christ was, and is, always "coming": and the reality of God's self-identification with humanity is implicit in the whole story of His dealings with the world. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted" is an older and by no means less vital sidelight on the Cross than the Pauline theology itself. Behind it all lies the haunting mystery of the problem of evil. There is no final answer yet to the problem of evil, and God's relation to it. Can we believe, with Dr. Oman, that "in the end we have to say with the prophet, 'Is there evil in the city and God hath not done it?' or with Isaiah: 'I make peace and create evil. I am the Lord that doeth all these things?'" We may have to say it provisionally, but it is no solution of the real problem. Isaiah's bold cutting of the Gordian knot helps us no more than the Garden of Eden solution. Indeed, they have a common root. We have only sidelights on the problem as yet: confidences to hang on to, until we see more clearly in the fuller light to come, than is now possible in a glass darkly. One of which—for me, the chief of which—is that God is not outside the human problem—the pain, the struggle, the evil—but right inside it with us. And that, surely, is what the Cross of Christ stands for supremely. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." Tremendous utterance, but with a bold, unflinching grasp of a basic truth. He was made not a "sinner," of course, but was plunged into the vortex of sin as the representative human being, who was "in God" accepting the burden and ultimate responsibility of human sin, and thereby "overcoming the world." Christ—



"God in Christ reconciling"—went "open-eyed into the midst of the fray and won the greatest victory of all time." "The object of faith," as Oman says, "is the love of God in all and over all, forbearing with all evil that springs from man's freedom, yet never defeated by it." At least, then, the Cross is this—the Divine love at the very heart of humanity's struggle, at its hardest and worst: and so making it worth while. Is not that a Gospel? No theologian can tell us more than we already know about the evil that is in the world. What we most urgently need to-day is the theology of world-hope (theology, I say, for hope that is not based there is no hope) confidence in the victory that overcometh the world. Supremely—and only—we have that in the Cross of Christ and in the revelation of God that lies behind it and is enshrined in it. It may not solve the problem, but it throws Heaven's light upon it—the only light that illumines it at all. And this is nobody's theory, but part of the essential Fact of Christ: it is inevitable to a divine incarnation which was truly complete. Perhaps the most comforting and reassuring thing about it all is that Christ never allowed the problem of evil to get between Him and God. And if He did not we need not: evil was God's problem before it was ours. With His last breath Jesus cried from the Cross, "Father"—"into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He had overcome the world. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your *faith*": to hold on to God in spite of the worst that is in the world, the worst that the world can do: confidently to leave the solution of the humanly insoluble problem to God: and to find, in the face of Jesus Christ on the Cross—at the last uplifted to His Father—that the gleam and the glow of the resurrection life is the supreme symbol and warrant of the final overcoming of the world.

*"O generous love! that He Who smote  
In man for man the foe,  
The double agony in man  
For man should undergo."*

And that is not something that Christ does *instead* of us, but on our behalf and in our heart. For as old Angelus Silesius, deeply divining the real meaning of Christ's death, said long ago—

*"The Cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul;  
The Cross in thine own heart alone will make thee whole."*

The real issue does not lie between theories: it is a matter of basic facts: supremely of the true significance of the Incarnation. For us Christians the dominant fact of religion is the Fact of Christ. How are we to relate the Fact of Christ with the historic *facts* of Christ? That is the vital question to-day. And with regard to the tendency of a good deal of recent New Testament criticism (of which it is very significant that Dr. Oman speaks with great dubiety in "Honest Religion") it falls to be said that if the upshot of the more extreme and rigid Form Criticism is that we have little or no direct knowledge of, and contact with, the historic Jesus, but only of a Christianity filtered through the alembic of sincere but not, what I may call, primary minds, then let us face it. But it will not leave us where we were, modernist and traditionalist alike. Nor will it leave the world of belief where it was. So far as it is accepted in our own familiar circles, it involves a reversion of Evangelicalism to a reliance on tradition which, as soon as men begin to *think it through*, will be fatal to it, though, doubtless, very favourable to Catholicism. I, for one, refuse to believe it: and prefer to regard it—in Dr. Oman's words—as "just another category to drill the records." For if I can no longer make contact with the historic Jesus, there is nothing left—"for me"—of Christianity at all.

But is there any need for this recent Defeatism, with its Barthian and Neo-Calvinist reactions? Prof. Vincent Taylor, in his very valuable and balanced book, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, tells us that "Bultmann is radical to the point of scepticism. . . . If Bultmann is right we have lost not only the Gospel framework but also much the greater part of the material. The (Synoptic) narratives are merely legends and ideal constructions, and most of the sayings (of Jesus) while Palestinian in origin are products of primitive Christianity, which puts back its own ideas and beliefs into the lips of Jesus" (Where, by the way, did these ideas and beliefs come from? These early "creative communities" of the Form Critic, generally regarded as consisting for the most part of "unlearned and ignorant men," must have included a no inconsiderable proportion of remarkable and original unknowns). But if this is so, in any decisive sense, how are we to account for the significant cleavage between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of Jesus in the matter of the forgiveness of sins? It is useless for our modern traditionalists to assure us that it isn't there and that the Gospels actually support the "classic"



tradition, when the difference is there for all to see. Dr. Taylor himself continues, "The certainty with which the community put the eschatological message into (Christ's) lips is hard to understand if He did not actually proclaim it." This is not really very hard to understand in view of the wide currency of apocalyptic; but in any case it is harder still to understand the earliest disciples (the "creative community" of the Form-critics) recording, as the teaching of Jesus on the forgiveness of sins, a doctrine so formidably in conflict with the beginnings of the "classic" theory of the Atonement, with which they are presumed to have been already deeply imbued. Either Jesus held the view of forgiveness attributed to Him in the Gospels, or He did not. If He did, then theology must begin at last (or now begin again) to reckon with it. If He did not, then it is past all logical credence that it can ever have been attributed to Him by people who already accepted the basis of the "traditional" theory of the Atonement.

Prophecy is notoriously a perilous undertaking: but I am bold enough confidently to believe that the defeatism of the extremest phases of Form-criticism (with its unfortunate repercussions on a good deal of recent theology, like that of the whole approach of Barthianism to Christianity) if psychologically understandable enough, will prove to be dated and ephemeral. It is not only in political Europe that freedom will come into its own again. And—for me—the last word is this. If "the synoptic narratives are mainly legends, and most of the sayings of Jesus are products of primitive Christianity (wherever it came from) which puts back its own ideas and beliefs into the lips of Jesus"—if in a word, the historic Jesus cannot be found in the mists of tradition, the Christ of experience is a pure hallucination. But if I can still make contact with the historic Jesus, if faith has still its Olivet and love its Galilee—as I unshakably believe to be true—then what Jesus Himself taught about God and man—and forgiveness—is final. And nothing that conflicts with it can be true. Theories may come and go, but the Son abideth for ever. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my *words* shall not pass away." Paul never claimed that. Only Jesus has ever claimed that. Though having endured so long it is time that they received due recognition and authority.

Unless our Christian theology is utterly bankrupt, the cry "Back to Jesus" is still valid, though the way back may not be as simple as once it seemed. We can still go back to Him and find

Him—both “Christ in the letter and Christ in the heart.” As Schweitzer did, in those last, strange, haunting passages of a book, that, to some, seemed almost to destroy Him. A book, moreover—it is very pertinent to add—which propounds a theory of Jesus, which Dr. Oman tersely shows to have had its day and ceased to be, like many other captivating theories, momentarily hailed as “the last word,” before and since.

But it is no good going back to Him, unless we are willing to believe *HIM*.

HAROLD E. BRIERLEY.

## C. J. CADOUX

THERE are two ways in which one might attempt to answer the question put in our title, according to the particular sense one gives to the word "means". The question might signify either "What place does the Cross take in my personal religious life?" or "What account can I give of it by way of intellectually justifying that place?" The former of these is easier to answer than the latter. I share with the whole of Christendom the conviction that the Cross stands at the centre of the Gospel, that it is the focal point at which God's redeeming activity on behalf of sinners is made clear, and that the only fitting response to it is self-abasement, adoration, and grateful acceptance of the offered gift of forgiveness and salvation. This conviction is enshrined in innumerable expressions of Christian devotion, some of them so sufficient in their simplicity and directness that they remain in vogue as summary confessions of faith despite the lapse of years and the changes in Christian thinking. "Christ died for our sins"; "By whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses"; "He died that we might be forgiven; He died to make us good"; and so on. So fundamental has the truth thus expressed been felt to be that the Christian heart finds only one thing to be done with regard to it.

*"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small:  
Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."*

That is what, in one sense of the word, the Cross "means" to all Christians: and that is also what it means to me.

There remains, however, awaiting an answer, the second interpretation of our question—namely, What does this characteristically-Christian "survey of the wondrous Cross" involve for theology?

The endeavour to reply rightly to that question has resulted in innumerable "theories of the Atonement". The multiplicity and

variety of these theories presupposes in the minds of those who have framed them two preliminary convictions: (1) that it is justifiable to attempt to build an intellectually-satisfying theory, and (2) that it is not wholly beyond our power to do so. These convictions are indeed sound: and we might well take them for granted without further ado, were it not that at the present moment there is clearly perceptible in our midst a tendency on the part of many theologians seriously to challenge them both. Trading on the indisputable facts that all theological questions ultimately involve mysteries which the human mind cannot fathom, that there is therefore apt to be an element of paradox in the data needing to be unified, and in the resultant theory concerning them, that human judgment is in some measure vitiated by sin, and that each individual thinker brings a certain "personal factor" with him, many are busy to-day decrying as "rationalistic" the effort to clarify the great theological verities of our faith. "You cannot rationalize the Atonement", "You cannot intellectualize intercession"—such is their constant reply to any progressive attempt to reach a tenable theology.

In criticism of this tendency I wish to observe, firstly, that its representatives do not hesitate to reason vehemently themselves in support of the particular views which they hold, thus presupposing that very validity of the reasoning process in theological matters which they promptly deny as "rationalism" whenever the argument goes against them. Secondly, intelligence is God's gift; and not to use it to the full for the understanding of His ways is to dishonour Him, and to disobey Jesus' own emphatic behest. Thirdly, while intellectually-unclarified religious beliefs are often fruitful and precious, no one capable of clarifying them is the better for leaving them in a state of haziness and confusion. And fourthly, to do intellectually less than our very best in the statement and exposition of the truths of religion is to make it unnecessarily hard for others to receive these truths; in other words, it is to cause others to stumble—an offence which our Saviour condemned with the most emphatic severity.

We are, therefore, fully justified in seeking for an intellectually-unified theory in our thinking about the Cross. We must certainly be on our guard against over-simplification, and against any shallow assumption that no mystery is beyond our comprehension. On the other hand, we ought not to be deterred from drastically revising traditional beliefs (if we feel led to do so) by any appeal

to the impotence of the human mind or the necessarily-paradoxical nature of Christian truth.

There are, I would submit, four conditions which must be fulfilled if a satisfying interpretation of the Cross is to be attained.

(1) *The interpretation must be consistent with what we profess to believe about God.* This implies that we must seek for the key to the central mystery of the Cross in nothing lower than the highest categories under which our relations with God can be conceived. These categories are those drawn from the intimate personal and moral relations between a father and his children. Such personal relationship is not indeed the only relationship in which we stand to God. When we comply by necessity with the Laws of Nature which govern the material and psychological realms, we may be said to stand in a physical or mechanical relation to God. When He deals with us as Judge or Master (as He is so often depicted in Scripture as doing), approving and condemning, rewarding and punishing, we stand to Him in a judicial or quasi-commercial relation. These sub-personal relations are real and important, but they are not supreme; and they can be rightly understood only in the light of the fatherly love and filial trust which embraces and transcends them.

Theories of the Atonement therefore which employ categories drawn exclusively from one or other of these subsidiary relations may be helpful as vehicles, illustrations, or metaphorical expressions of something more central: but they can never be fully satisfying, simply because they make no use of what matters *most* in our knowledge of God.

Many of the theories of the past were variations on the idea of the death of Jesus as a propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice. That is to say, they conceived God's relation to us as at bottom judicial or commercial. Not only so, but they drew their chief expressions from the vocabulary of the sacrificial system of late Judaism—a system cradled in the superstitions of a semi-civilized Hebrew tribe, long ago condemned by the finer minds of the nation (Amos v. 25; Hos. vi. 6; Jer. vii. 22 f.; Ps. xl. 6, l. 7-15, li. 16 f.; etc.), and reduced in our Lord's day to an unintelligent if systematic destruction of animal-life, the sole reason for which was the erroneous belief that God had commanded it. Such a system might indeed supply a ready illustration of the work of Christ, might even have value as reminding Christians of the tragic costliness of the

forgiveness of their sins: but because of its sub-ethical character, it could never serve as the main line of interpretation. Much the same is true of the effort to base a theory of the Atonement on the idea of Jesus' death as a "ransom".

The attempt has in recent years been again made to set forth the true significance of the Cross as primarily a "victory" won over the powers of evil (on the strength of passages like 1 Cor. ii. 8; Col. ii. 15; John xii. 31, xvi. 11). Here again the idea has value as expressing the Divine success. But to make of it the main solution of the problem is to adopt a category even less ethical than that of sacrifice. For a victory, strictly understood, is a mechanical event, wherein the enemy is overcome by *force majeure*, and subdued against his will. Such a figure is a poor instrument for expounding an act whereof the prime significance is that it is a personal reconciliation. If our doctrine of the Atonement is to be consistent with what Jesus has revealed to us of God's nature, it must be couched in nothing less than personal and ethical terms.

(2) *It must do justice to the Biblical language.* This does not mean that every New Testament reference to the Cross must be treated as a fixed doctrinal datum, to be taken up as it stands into our system of thought. Allowance must be made for the fact that religious enthusiasts engaged in practical propaganda-work are not necessarily as well fitted for theorizing about their religious experience and convictions as they are for witnessing to the inner substance of them. Moreover, the Hebrew mind, unlike the Greek and the modern, was not given to the exact and precise statement of unseen realities: it availed itself rather of poetry, metaphor, imagery; and we misuse its testimonies if we take them as carefully-phrased doctrinal formulations. That would be my ground for refusing to understand Jesus' own occasional use of sacrificial expressions (Mark x. 45, xiv. 24) as tying us down to what is usually understood as the sacrificial interpretation of His death. What fidelity to the Scriptural evidence *does* involve is that we should in our doctrinal constructions give the Cross as central a place as the early Church gave it, and furthermore that we should interpret the utterances of the Church concerning it (especially Isa. liii) according to their personal, moral, and psychological meaning.

(3) *Our theory must harmonize Jesus' redeeming death with His teaching and His earthly ministry generally.* This condition has in

the past been sadly disregarded. Indeed, so little sometimes has His history been related to His work that many theories of the Atonement would lose none of their meaning if, instead of dying at His enemies' hands, Jesus had perished by accident or had even died a natural death or by suicide.<sup>1</sup> Neander stated the sound principle long ago: "There must be a right conception of Christ's self-sacrifice as a moral act, in connexion with his whole calling, in order to any just *doctrinal* view of his sufferings".<sup>2</sup> We must therefore regard as inadequate any theory of the Atonement to which the grandeur of Jesus' personal character, His doctrine of God, and His ethical teaching, are not absolutely integral. If such things are treated as mere adjuncts, the resultant theory will be defective, like a schoolboy's solution of a mathematical problem which does not make use of all the data of the problem.

(4) *Lastly, our theory must do justice to the evangelical experience.* As a classic picture of that oft-testified experience, we may take Bunyan's account of Christian's release from the burden of sins on his back as soon as he reached the Cross.<sup>3</sup> Our theory, that is to say, must provide the intellectual basis for a Gospel for sinners. As a doctrinal statement, it must make intelligible the marvellous power of Jesus' death in the conversion of sinful men to God. One must not however expect that the best-constructed doctrine will necessarily seem adequate to any and every simple convert, or will necessarily effect the conversion of any given sinner when it is laid before him. Theories of the Atonement are sometimes unfairly pronounced "inadequate" because they fail to pass one or other of these two over-exacting tests. But when we realize that *no* one theory, however precious to those who declare all others "inadequate", will satisfy all true converts, or convert everyone presented with it, we see that all that this condition entitles us to ask is that our doctrine shall at least make the typical evangelical experience theologically intelligible.

The construction of a satisfying theory must, then, start from the affirmation that, since God is the Father *par excellence*, His supreme purpose with regard to man must be that man should dwell with Him in intimate personal fellowship and loyal obedience. Looked at from that point of view, sin will be best defined,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. B. Macaulay, *Death of Jesus*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Jesus Christ* (ed. 1880), p. 380, note; cf. A. B. Macaulay, *op. cit.* pp. 44-8.

<sup>3</sup> For a good modern statement, see R. W. Dale, *Christian Doctrine*, pp. 233 f.



not as an hereditary taint, nor as wilful rebellion against God, nor as the source of legal guilt (though all these definitions contain an element of truth), but as that which prevents or hinders or impairs man's loving filial relationship with God. And forgiveness will be primarily, not the removal of a stain, nor the judicial pronouncement of legal innocence, nor the remission of a penalty, but the overcoming of the hindrances to personal fellowship with God.

If that, then, is what forgiveness is, there will be two conditions of its effective bestowal. It will depend, in the first place, upon God's willingness to forgive, *i.e.*, upon His fatherly longing to get the broken fellowship with man restored. Such willingness and such longing spring from a love to which human sin must needs be a source of tragic sorrow. The idea of the infinite God enduring pain is one at which many devout and learned minds have stumbled: but if we are to retain our belief in the central fact of His personal relations with us (and nothing less than that is involved in calling Him "our Father"), it is difficult to see how we can avoid affirming that He suffers as a result of His love for human sinners. It is in the recognition of this suffering that we have the element of truth enshrined so imperfectly in the various sacrificial theories of the Atonement. It has been customary for defenders of the sacrificial theory to describe all other theories as "purely subjective"; but so long as God's loving readiness to forgive is posited as the initial condition of man's reconciliation with Him, the charge of neglecting the objective aspect of the Atonement is clearly unjustified.

The other condition of forgiveness is man's repentant acceptance of God's offer. The New Testament does indeed occasionally speak of forgiveness, both human and divine, when it means simply readiness to forgive (e.g., Matt. vi. 12*b*; Luke xxiii. 34*a*). But normally we are to understand by forgiveness the restoration of fellowship (e.g., Luke xvii. 3; Matt. vi. 12*a*); and for that, the co-operation of *both* parties is obviously requisite. Before God can in this full sense forgive us, there is needed, not only His love, but our willingness to accept His love. We need to have such faith and trust in Him that, when we realize our lack of fellowship with Him, we not only repent wholeheartedly of the sin which has caused that lack, but we throw ourselves upon His goodness for its remedy. Such repentance of course involves a serious intention not to break the filial bond again, and a belief that God will help us to preserve it.



With the ground thus cleared, I venture next on my tentative theory of the Atonement. I would submit that the redemptive virtue of Jesus' suffering on the Cross lies in the fact that, being the natural and inevitable outcome of His love for those who hated Him, it embodied in itself and expresses to us the suffering which God, because He loves us, feels at all our sin; that, if this self-revelation of God's costly love is responded to by us with due docility and seriousness, its effect is so to humble and convince us, that our eyes are opened to our own sinfulness and to the goodness and pardoning love of God; that, thus convinced, we trust, repent, are reconciled to Him, and empowered to live thereafter in fellowship with Him and free from the sins that had parted us from Him.

Let us now submit this theory to the four tests suggested above.

(1) *Is it consistent with what we profess to believe about God?* Yes. In this respect it surely forms a contrast to those theories which treat the atoning death of Jesus as a transaction whereby God Himself was changed (otherwise than by becoming able through our repentance fully to forgive us). Such theories labour under a dual disadvantage. (a) They imply that God never fully forgave a sin until Jesus had died. Such was indeed the serious belief of the Middle Ages: Dante, for instance (*Paradiso*, xxxii. 28-33), kept John the Baptist in Hell for two years—the period that elapsed between his martyrdom and the Crucifixion. It is, however, decisively disproved by such passages as Mic. vii. 18 f.; Isa. xxxviii. 17 fin., xliii. 25; Ps. xxxii. 1 f., ciii. 12; and many others. (b) These theories imply that God was not always as loving as He became after Jesus' death, which would, of course, mean that we could picture a Being more perfect than God actually was—which is absurd. By tracing the prime efficacy of Christ's death to its power to awaken greater penitence in man, we avoid these grave incongruities in our thought of God.

(2) *Does our theory do justice to the Biblical language?* Yes, provided "justice" be understood as explained above (p. 32). In exhibiting Jesus' death as that which, while we were yet sinners, makes God's forgiveness of us a practical possibility, our theory gives that death as central and fundamental a place as does the New Testament itself, however partial be the extent to which we can treat the New Testament devotional expressions concerning it as strictly speaking doctrinal. But in two special respects I would claim that our theory satisfies Scripture better than do most alternative theories.

(a) Observe how admirably Isa. liii (a passage constantly connected in the New Testament with Jesus' death) supports our conclusion. The author of that chapter had begun with a self-satisfied contempt for the afflicted Servant of Yahweh (vv. 2 f.), but had at length been convinced by the latter's sufferings of his own sin (vv. 4-6): he thus takes a place among the penitent "many", the removal of whose sins constitutes the Servant's final triumph (vv. 11 f.). Jesus' re-echoing of this word "many" in Mark x. 45, xiv. 24, in connexion with his death, indicates that he himself may be quoted as sanctioning this view. Clement of Rome (vii. 4) explicitly says that Christ's blood "offered to the whole world the grace of repentance".<sup>1</sup>

(b) In locating the redemptive value of the Cross in the fact that God thereby moves the sinner to repentance, we can see how some minor measure of such redemptive value inheres also in the self-sacrifice of those who follow where Christ has led. Such humble participation of the disciple in the redemptive work of the Saviour is suggested and attested by many New Testament passages: I would quote in this connection Matt. v. 16; Mark viii. 34, x. 39, 45; Phil. iii. 10; Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 21, iii. 17 f.;<sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 16. In later days it appears in the contention that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. But such a thought can hardly be admitted at all if the redeeming significance of Jesus' death lies in the fact that it was a sacrificial transaction mysteriously necessitated by the fact of sin. So far from our theory reducing Jesus' death to a "mere martyrdom", it does better justice to the Divine power that is present in *all* genuine martyrdoms. If objection be raised to describing our Lord as a "martyr", I would reply that I claim the right to stand in this matter by the language of the New Testament (Rev. i. 5, iii. 14; cf. ii. 13).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Acta Apollonii* (A.D. 180-5), 36: "Jesus Christ . . . who by means of suffering stopped the beginnings of sins".

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chas. Bigg's notes on these passages: "The disciple's cross 'draws' as does that of his Master; the sacrifice is the same in its [own lesser] degree, and so are the results. . . . He died as the innocent sin-offering, and our innocent sufferings have in their degree a similar value; He brought us near to God, and we may bring others" (*Intern. Crit. Comm.* on *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, pp. 145, 161).

<sup>3</sup> The persecuted Christians of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177-8), we are told (Eusebius, *Church-Hist.*, V. ii. 3), "gladly accorded the title of 'martyr' to Christ 'the trustworthy and true martyr'", as he is called in the Revelation. It is true that the word *μάρτυς* (lit. "witness") meant essentially one who had confessed his faith before a heathen court, whether he perished in consequence or not. All the same, the statement is significant, especially in view of the fact that Jesus had laid down His life.

(3) *Does our theory harmonize Jesus' redeeming death with His teaching and His earthly ministry generally?* Yes. For (a) we have integrally connected the human and historic cause of Jesus' death (as the inevitable result of the clash between His love and their sin) with its redeeming power (as the demonstration of God's love for those who sin against Him).<sup>1</sup> This is a link normally missing in most conservative theories of the Atonement, according to which, though Jesus is believed to have been good, and His saving death an act of love, his goodness as a man stood in no really-close relation to His power as a Saviour.

(b) We are not embarrassed, as the older theories were, by the fact that in His teaching Jesus frequently depicts God forgiving sin simply on the strength of His own fatherly love and the sinner's genuine repentance, with no reference to Jesus' own atoning death: if that death was effective for forgiveness only by standing for some change in God Himself, this teaching becomes impossible to explain or even accept.

(4) *Does our theory do justice to the evangelical experience?* Yes, again provided we do not ask for impossibilities, such as no conceivable theory could supply. We have no right to ask, Will sinners inevitably repent if this version of the Cross is put before them? But if we ask, Are there people who are at peace with God through Christ on such a view as this? the answer of course is, Yes, any number. For what saves men is the power of God in Christ, not theories as to precisely how that power operates, valuable in their place as such theories are. And any theory which fully recognizes that in the Cross the forgiving love and redeeming power of God are visible and available for sinful men may claim to be doing adequate justice to the evangelical experience.

I recognized at the outset that we might well find ourselves faced at the end of our investigation with certain insoluble mysteries. While I venture to think that the theory I have sketched is valid as far as it goes, I am aware that one or two further questions are bound to be raised, to which we are perhaps unable to supply entirely-satisfactory answers, and which I have no space here fully to discuss. I must content myself with very brief comments on these questions, observing only in regard to them generally that, inasmuch as they are obscurer than the

<sup>1</sup> A passage in the *Clementine Homilies* (iii. 19) may be quoted as emphasizing the connexion between these two.

matters we have been discussing, speculative answers to them cannot rightly be used to disprove or discredit our theory, for that would involve the mistake of attempting to explain *ignotum per ignotius*.

(1) *What is the relation between Jesus' death and His Resurrection?* It is customary with some to speak of Jesus as by His Cross and Resurrection "vanquishing sin and death". What precisely this means is rarely explained. When translated into personal terms, this mechanical and almost-mythological expression may well mean that Jesus' self-sacrificing goodness conquers our moral blindness and spiritual death, and that His Resurrection gives the needed assurance that despite the Cross He reigns in redemptive power (Phil. iii. 10 f., Rom. vi. 4). What beyond that we can say I must not attempt here to discuss.

(2) *How is Jesus' work as Redeemer related to His Person as Incarnate Son of God?* All I want to remark on this profound problem is that quality of life is prior to metaphysical status of Person as the reality with which we are concerned. The former is the key to the latter, not *vice versâ*. I sometimes hear people say, with the Gospel-record of Jesus' life before them, "The martyrdom of a good man nineteen centuries ago is nothing to me, unless that man be God incarnate". I regard such a confession as completely missing the true significance and character of our Saviour's redeeming work.

(3) *In what sense was the Cross necessary to human salvation?* I surmise that the meaning of the word "necessary" is not clear enough to enable us to give a simple answer. For though, on the one hand, we know there have been thousands of sinners saved through the Cross, and to all seeming incapable of being saved by any other means, we must not pronounce His death "necessary" in such a sense as to imply that before it or without it forgiveness was a strict impossibility (see above, p. 35). For myself, I cannot get beyond the idea conveyed in Tennyson's lines:

*"Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin".*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Moffatt, *Theology of the Gospels*, p. 126: "God creates the very desire for forgiveness by bringing home to men what sin means to Him and to themselves, as a sin against love; and this forgiveness, with the judgment on which it rested, needed the sacrifice of Jesus to reach men fully" (italics mine).

(4) Finally, *how is our theory of God's suffering being wrapped up in and expressed by human self-sacrifice to be defended against the charge of pantheism?* The answer is that there are pantheisms and pantheisms. The pantheism that is heterodox is that which reduces God and the world to an undifferentiated unity, and thus permits of no real distinction between good and evil. But a view which emphasizes the omnipresence of God, the all-pervasive operation of His Spirit, the truth that in Him we live and move and have our being, whether one calls it "pantheistic" or not, is certainly not heterodox. And it is only such a view that we have here adopted. We have simply taken due account of the fact—true and credible, however mysterious—that in all our afflictions He is afflicted, and that

*"every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone".*

To affirm the presence and activity of God in all human goodness<sup>1</sup> may or may not deserve to be called a form of pantheism: but to deny it is to banish God from His universe. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself". And not only so, but Christ was "the first-born among many brothers", and "he that keepeth His (God's) commandments abideth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave unto us".

C. J. CADOUX.

<sup>1</sup> See a remarkable passage (too long to quote) to this effect in Mark Rutherford's novel, *Deliverance*, pp. 108 f.

D. R. DAVIES

ONE of the undoubted difficulties which Christian propaganda has to meet in a secularized society is the unspoken assumption that theology is something completely isolated from, and irrelevant to, common daily life, with its complex of problems. To the mind of the average modern person, theology has a similar significance to that of astrology, i.e., it is utterly remote from life and history. Its abstractness is absolute. What the average man feels about it—for he never *thinks* about it—is that theology is a queer, inexplicable hobby of parsons and parsonically-minded laymen, a hobby like ceramics or philately. He has no suspicion whatever of the *fact* that the most trivial or seemingly insignificant events in day-to-day experience have profound theological implications; that the shortage of butter, e.g., is ultimately a theological question more even than an economic one. In a Press controversy with Mr. H. G. Wells, whose secularism has become a disease, he dismissed my argument that eschatology had immediate political significance as a peculiar, personal fad.<sup>1</sup>

Now this difficulty is no doubt inherent in the subject itself, but it has been greatly aggravated by the way in which it has been taught. Or rather, by the way in which it has not been taught. Theology has been, and still is, presented as something divorced from the actual social situation. It is seldom shown as arising partly from the actual existing historic situation; partly a reflection of the conflict of secular interests. Theology has been a profound factor in the concrete class divisions of history and society. If that fact had been better appreciated by theologians, theology would not be the gilded ivory tower which it has unfortunately become. No better or more forcible illustration of all this can be found than the theology of atonement.

## I

The Cross is first of all a historic event. It is something that happened in history, and is therefore susceptible of historic

<sup>1</sup> *Vide British Weekly*, June 29th, 1939.



analysis and appreciation. Its theology has to be extracted from it, not imposed upon it or dumped on it. It has to be extracted, not as a mere rational process, but as a process of faith, yet strictly historically. Against the background of the Biblical revelation of the self-disclosure of God in Christ, we have to discover the theology of the Cross embedded in the historic situation in which it happened. In this pursuit, we have to make use of all that historical science and scholarship provides. If an analogy is desired, we can obtain one in Mr. Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History*. In that supreme study, Mr. Toynbee extracts his philosophy of history from the movement of history itself, by a severely empirical procedure.<sup>1</sup> But long before Mr. Toynbee, Kierkegaard saw the great significance of the historical approach to the theology of the Cross. "But in fact the death and sacrifice of Christ as a dogma is an historical occurrence. So one may ask, How did this come about, how in the world was it possible that Christ could be crucified?"<sup>2</sup> What does the answer to this question of Kierkegaard's reveal? In essence—and we can only discuss essentials in this essay—it shows three things.

First, in the Man Jesus, there appeared a personality of supreme goodness, whether goodness be defined as religion or morality. He was a revolutionary, minus the defect of the revolutionary, which is an insufficient appreciation of the gain and quality of tradition. He combined revolutionary awareness of the dynamic present and future with a conservative realization of the imperishable treasure of the past—a rare if not unique combination. "I have not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." Revolutions always lose, temporarily at least, many of the gains of the past, as well as its obstructions. But Christ pioneered a revolution which preserved the past by carrying it forward. He made the presence and reality of a Holy God the operative principle of personal and social life. He taught a way of life, an ethic, which was to the fulfilment and advantage of both individual and national being. He was the embodiment of a completely disinterested goodness.

But, second, this disinterested goodness called forth the hostility and active opposition of the *best* elements of society. That Jesus should arouse the hatred of the worst elements of His time was natural. That is what history has shown in every situation. But what this situation shows is something much more startling:

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Study of History*, Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide The Present Age*, p. 87 (Oxford University Press, 1940).



*that the revolt of the good elements of society against goodness is as natural as that of the bad elements.* At the points of historic crisis, both the good and the bad elements unite in resisting the will of God. Extremes meet. The relative distinctions *within* society merge into the absolute opposition of the whole society—a fact which takes a lot of explaining. Men always remain divided against one another. It is only against God that they unite.

The best elements of first-century Judaism were concentrated among those who were the official champions of the religious institutions (such as the priests and Pharisees) and the active political rebels against Rome. Their mutual enmity did not prevent them forming a united front against Christ. It was faintly similar to the united opposition of the French bourgeoisie and the French Communist Party against the continuation of the war against Hitler in 1940, when, e.g., Laval and Maurice Thorez were, for however different reasons, on the same platform. So Barrabas and the high priest—the Lenin and the Pope of the time, so to speak—symbolized the unity of the nation against Christ, its most gifted and greatest Son. Christ's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees ought not to blind us to their solid virtues, to their zealous devotion to their traditions and religion. They were, as Claud Montefiore and Dr. Travers Herford have shown, very worthy men—the fine, moral backbone of their society, really good people. The virtues they lacked were supplied by the political rebels—political vision, courage, reckless self-forgetfulness. But in relation to Christ, both were agreed in resistance to Him. Their very goodness became a more intense evil.

Third, the good people set no limit to their opposition to Christ. They persuaded themselves that whatever became necessary to make their resistance to Christ effective was a good thing to do. Thus the Pharisees proclaimed the sovereignty of Rome, to the denial of which their whole tradition committed them. "We have no king but Cæsar." The rebel—Judas—betrayed a fellow rebel to the common enemy. Finally, they killed Him, not by a political impulse, but as the result of a deliberately pursued policy. They even threatened Pilate in order to compass their object, for which they had no difficulty in enlisting the co-operation of the people, "the masses" who, according to the Marxian myth, are the source of virtue and wisdom. To kill Jesus became the equivalent of doing God a service. Human goodness transfigured crime into a divine act.

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In these simplified essentials of the death of Jesus, the minimum elements of a theology of atonement begin to emerge. In this historical situation, there are the raw materials, so to speak, of a theology of reconciliation and also a philosophy of history. It is, at least, doubtful whether a doctrine of atonement can be realistically formulated apart from a philosophy of history, from the justification of God in human experience.

## II

What, then, does the Cross mean?

*First, it is a revelation of man's sin, and of the contradiction in which it involves history.* "The ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands."<sup>1</sup>

Sin is revealed as the illimitable persistence of a positive will. It is not a mere negative, or shadow, which was the conception to which Liberal Protestantism degenerated. Sin is not, as Dr. Tennant contended, something which is a survival of animal heritage, which progressive evolution is gradually eliminating. It is an affirmation of *human* will against God, to which progressive social development is entirely irrelevant. Social revolution dictates the forms which sin takes in successive historic periods. It leaves entirely untouched *the will that is the source of sin*. Will, by the affirmation of itself against God, decrees the inevitable separation of man from God.

To see sin as the product of will is a matter of the greatest importance, since it enables us to stick to the concrete objective facts of history. By converting sin into an abstract, ghostly metaphysic, the whole problem of sin and guilt is falsified and made unreal, with this fatal consequence: that the sinful character of history disappears. That is why so much of the theology of atonement seems remote from life. Sin is not a substance or metaphysic. It is the primary, fundamental preference of the ego to everyone and everything. This is the real character of man in history.

We come upon a clue to the problem of atonement in the paradoxical fact that it was *good* men who put Jesus to death. Evil men alone could never have succeeded in getting Him crucified. And that is a symbol of the most persistent contradiction in history. The Cross in that sense is universal history on a small stage. Nearly all the great evils of history have been made possible, been maintained and sustained by the good men and women of society. Bad

<sup>1</sup> Ps. ix. 16.

institutions, especially, thrive on the support of the saints. The problem of the reformer in every age is to deprive evil of the support of good people. By way of realist examples, let us consider a few facts in contemporary life.

Hitlerism in Germany is almost an unmixed evil, and for Europe it is, if possible, a still greater evil. On this fact there is practically universal agreement. Are we to conclude, then, that all those who support Hitler in Germany are bad people? Such a conclusion, however tempting, would be erroneous. Mr. Sebastian Haffner<sup>1</sup> has very cogently argued that the convinced, zealous supporters of Hitler are a very tiny minority of the German people—perhaps not more than 10,000. At the other extreme, there is a small minority who are equally convinced and zealous in their opposition. But between these two extremes, there is a vast mass supporting the régime in various degrees. Let us assume that the 10,000 fanatics are men and women of deep-seated corruption—not a difficult assumption. But what of the mass of sixty to seventy millions whose support makes the régime possible? Among them are Protestant and Catholic Christians, erstwhile Social Democrats and Communists. Are *all* these bad people? In the mass, surely, they are average, kindly, decent, conventionally good people. How comes it that decent people can bless such an enormity as Nazism?

Outside Germany, too, strange as it may seem, supporters of Nazism or its equivalent are not all evil people. They are not all Quislings and Laval. For example, the Oxford Group has thrown up a number of people who saw in Hitler a man of God. In Holland one of the most ardent Pro-Nazis was the Rev. Blake, an American clergyman, a very worthy gentleman.<sup>2</sup> Let us agree that the Oxford Group seems to be composed of political nitwits; still that does not dispose of our problem. The fact remains that people of exalted personal ethics give whole-hearted encouragement to an enormous evil. What is the dreadful twist in humanity through which social goodness seems to issue into social evil and historic disaster?

We can see a demonstration of the same paradox in the attitude of the political Left towards the Russian Trials and the pre-1941 Soviet war policy. That professional Communists, like Party leaders, were in agreement is intelligible. Their jobs and prestige were

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Germany Jekyll and Hyde* (Secker and Warburg, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Mr. Fodor's *The Revolution is On*, p. 77 (Allen and Unwin, 1941).

dependent upon it. But how can we account for the support of Christian clergy, of devoted political radicals, of thousands of good people with all the right ideas and the correct progressive attitude? Mr. Middleton Murry, in his *Betrayal of Christ by the Churches*, in a most brilliant and devastating analysis, conclusively showed how the present Lord Halifax, whose personal Christian character is beyond reproach, gave his blessing to a policy of naked revenge against Germany after the last war.

Now all this constitutes a profound and terrible problem. Even religion and morality and social and political progress become vehicles for egotism and sin. Nothing in human behaviour or capacity gives a guarantee that man, in any action or activity, can completely unite himself with God. In the name of his highest ideal, he kills the Son of God.

I have no space here to show how good people persuade themselves that the evil they desire is really a good, a process on which contemporary psychology sheds a great deal of light. The people who crucified Christ convinced themselves they had done God a service—a fact which our Lord realized when He prayed: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." Let me indicate briefly its theological significance.

Every classic doctrine of Atonement has insisted on the necessity of Christ's incarnation and death, if man is to be reconciled to God. In other words, God Himself, in Christ, had to enter history and suffer death, if any life in history was to be completely free of egotism and self-assertion; if any form of human goodness was to be free of the fatal dialectic of contradiction, by which human goodness becomes, at some point or other (as it always does) an occasion of new evil. Reconciliation with God—what does it mean? It means, surely, a life in unison with God; a human will which has merged itself in God's will as a new identity; a life completely free of self-will and original sin; a life in which God is desired with the whole heart at every moment. Before humanity can be reconciled, become one with God, such a human life must become an actuality. The intention of it is not enough. It must be a fact. The incarnation of God in Christ culminating in the Cross and Resurrection was necessary to transform intention into fact.

If any human being, with his heritage of ancestral sin, could have lived a life free of sin, Christ's entry into history would not have been necessary. If a single life could have been consistently and continuously God-centred, the Incarnation would have been

superfluous. God became man, because of man's utter incapacity to be God-centred.

It all turns on whether that final, fatal incapacity of man is a fact, a permanent fact in human history. If it is not; if at some point in time, man is capable of final solutions of moral and spiritual problems, then—and let us face this issue squarely—Cross and Incarnation become utterly meaningless. Whatever can be the point of God's entry into history *as a human being* to do what man, unaided, will achieve? The Incarnation then becomes a mere day-trip, and tragedy vanishes.

The Biblical Word about man is to assert his absolute inability. The Cross is a demonstration of it in concrete historical terms. For part of history, the 6,000 years of civilization already lived, man's inevitable self-destruction is a fact, capable of scientific corroboration. In the other part, the future, it is still a matter of faith and revelation. But for faith, the fact of the Cross makes it doubly certain that the future will merely demonstrate, in more clear and tragic forms, what the past has already proved beyond doubt. Let me state summarily, in concrete terms, what human inability to effect salvation will mean.

To begin with, man will never achieve Utopia on earth, i.e. there is no solution of the so-called social problem. The secular anticipation of a continuously progressive world-order is the most terrible miscalculation in history. The very technical achievements of society give rise to ideals, pursuit of which entangles man in an inevitable destruction. For example, the scientific triumph of modern man has given birth to the vision of an age of plenty—luxury and comfort for everybody. This vision has, in the mind of the mass, become a pernicious moral value—that wealth and comfort constitute the supreme ends of existence. It is precisely this value, this *immoral* value, which has made possible the evil success of Hitlerism. The secret of Hitler's success lies in the exalted moral ideals of a secularized world. This dream of material security procured him mass-support in Germany, Quislings in the conquered countries, and tolerance and sympathy in the governing class in Britain. What appeal would Hitler have for a generation that put a secondary value on comfort? Not much! A necessary product of social development becomes an inevitable tendency to social destruction. The inherent contradiction of self-centred will, of which this is but one example, will become more and more intense.

The same tendency operates in psychology and consciousness. The removal of obstacles by science in social life becomes, in psychology, an ideal of release from inhibition. But the essence of civilization is inhibition and restriction. Man's ultimate guilt-complex is irremovable. Freud, the benefactor, becomes Freud the destroyer. The abolition of inhibition leads straight to Fascism. Hitler's killers are the baleful result.

So the Utopia of modern secularized man is a dream—and an ignoble one.

Again, man will never overcome his fundamental "divided-mind" by mere psycho-analysis and science. The disintegration of consciousness is the necessary consequence of rebellion against God. There is no way of overcoming it—except by submission to God. But that is what Freud calls "the pernicious drug of religion."

Finally, man will never be able to resolve his spiritual contradiction. As the Wisdom of Solomon puts it, man "was made for incorruption." *But everything human is corrupt.* "There is no health in us." All substitutes for God in the soul are doomed to accentuate man's need, as salt water increases the torment of a thirsty man.

Of all this the Cross is a revelation.

Second. *The Cross, in revealing man's sin, by the same process reveals the love of God.* The revelation of sin is also a revelation of divine love.

The Cross was the consequence of Christ's determination to endure the resistance of human will to the divine will. In this familiar fact lies the key to the appreciation and understanding of what the love of God means.

If God acted like man, nothing would have been easier than the crushing of human resistance, as that was embodied in the co-operative determination of the whole nation to kill Christ. As our Lord Himself put it: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"<sup>1</sup> Had Christ so willed it, all that evil effort of scribe, Pharisee, priest and people could have been blown away like a feather in a monsoon. On the contrary, Christ suffered the evil will and endured it even to His death. He carried His cross *willingly*. Why did our Lord endure death, when He could so

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 52-4.



easily have prevented it? Why did He Himself suffer what He could have imposed on His enemies?

The answer to this question exposes the profound moral and spiritual significance of freedom. The Cross reveals God as love, because Christ died in order not to entrench upon freedom. Divine love cannot be understood apart from human freedom. God created man free. He also recreates him in freedom. Thus, human freedom is fundamental in the love of God.

It is only by the exercise of freedom that man can exhaust his dynamic will-to-power; only through liberty can his self-centred egoism dissipate itself. If human self-will cannot embody itself in the logic of its action, it is deprived of the education of experience, and perforce is condemned to perpetual illusion. If the desired action is forbidden to them, men are thereby driven to think that the forbidden action would have been their salvation. Now no action whatsoever that arises from self-centred will is capable of effecting salvation, which, however, man will not realize until he has experienced the action. Therefore, he must have freedom to embody will in act.

The Cross is the supreme symbol of all this in history, not only in the sense that it is a sign of it, but much more, that it is the concentration into a single act of the sum total of all freedom in action. Into the Cross, which Christ voluntarily suffered, are compressed all the acts of human self-will. What can be more complete or comprehensive than to kill God? The Cross is the cauldron of history; for in it meet all the mutual conflicts of human self-will. Man is ridden by the disastrous illusion that if he can get rid of God, he will then realize utopia—an illusion which translates itself in the Freudian analysis as "father-complex." And in the Cross, God permits Himself to be killed. He allows man absolute freedom. That is, He reveals His absolute love of man by permitting him uttermost freedom, so that through that same freedom he may abandon the desire for it. In freedom man originally assumed self-will, which was and is his original sin. In freedom only can he finally relinquish self-will.

### III

#### *The Cross and Human Freedom*

In the Cross, as we have seen, God is revealed as suffering the operations of self-centred will, which is only another way of saying



that liberty is a supreme value, *even though its actual results are evil*. But in the Cross we see also the human surrender of freedom — “nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt.” In other words, God refrains from suppressing freedom in order that man himself may voluntarily abandon it. Thus, freedom as understood in history is not an eternal value. It is temporary, and what is much more important, instrumental, *merely a means to an end*, which is the acceptance of God’s will in place of the individual’s self-will. That is, historic freedom is a means to an eternal bondage, in which the ends pursued in free self-will can alone be realized; in which self-realization, the achievement of personality, can alone be accomplished. Freedom is tolerated for the sake of authority. The Cross as the revelation of the love of God, has profound political and social implications.

If the essence of history is, as Benedetto Croce maintains, that it is a struggle for liberty, the liberty striven for is, nevertheless, negative and sub-Christian. There is a radical and eternal distinction between political liberty (and civic, legal and social liberty) and “the liberty of the Christian man.” The liberty for which man has fought in history, and which constitutes the epic and glory of human civilization, is, devoid of all trimmings, the effort to achieve unfettered self-will. “The liberty of the Christian man” is the absolute surrender of self-will to the will of God. Self-government is self-will on a grandiose scale, regulated, balanced and counter-checked. Democracy is power on a leash, which is always liable to snap, as it has done in the dictatorships. The grand theme of all history is: shall power (self-will) be restrained? The grand theme of the Cross is: shall power (self-will) be abandoned? The Cross accepts the decision of history and, at the same time, abrogates it.

The liberties of history are, therefore, nothing more than the pre-condition of Christian possibility, and, to that extent, demand the support of the Church. Just as the Cross supremely reveals the love of God in terms of personality, so do the dialectics of the historic process reveal the same love in the lower level of institutions and impersonal forces. History seems to be governed by a law which ordains that power, of necessity, breeds its own destruction, which means that history puts a premium on liberty. Tyranny is forever torn by contradiction, which is symbolized by the world distribution of material resources. The oil, e.g., without which Nazism cannot survive is under Russian ownership, which brings the two Totalitarianisms into inevitable conflict. History

involves tyranny in a necessary dissolution. Human nature, no less, involves liberty in a self-contradiction. Only on the Cross is that contradiction resolved by the surrender of history's supreme value, liberty, to God.

So, strictly speaking, freedom is not a Christian value, though subordinate and necessary to Christianity. Just as the Jewish Torah was a discipline preparatory for Christ, so freedom is the necessary secular discipline in which faith and repentance can operate. Freedom alone is not Christianity, though without it, Christianity is impossible.

The meaning of the Cross to me, then, is that it reveals and safeguards two comprehensive facts—the sin of man as the positive assertion of self-will against God; and God's attitude to man's sin as toleration of freedom, so that by the exercise of it, man may come to the acceptance of God's will as the source of his life and being. No doctrine of atonement is adequate which does not do justice to these two facts. In the life and death of our Lord, there was lived in human conditions a life completely at one with the will of God, which is the real atonement. In the person of Christ, humanity recovered its original relation to God.

D. R. DAVIES.



THE truths which the Christian religion proposes for our acceptance may be classed under two categories: firstly, those which are accessible to human reason; secondly, those which surpass reason, though they do not contradict it nor inhibit its exercise, and can be known only by a revelation made by God Himself. To the former belong such truths as those of the existence of God, together with certain conclusions as to His being and nature; the existence of the human, rational soul; and of a Moral Law commanding the conscience of man. To the latter belong certain truths which are specifically and uniquely Christian in that they are not, nor could be, the product of human reasoning, but have been communicated to man by God through the Person, the Life, and the Acts of His Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. These truths the Church names *Mysteries*, using the term in much the same sense as did a modern astronomer when he spoke of "the Mysterious Universe," that is, a universe which can be apprehended, and about which certain definite facts are known, but the nature of which cannot be comprehended in its entirety and fullness. Even, indeed, in what is known of the universe, there are apparent antinomies and well-nigh insoluble problems which, whilst they veil the hidden mystery from sight, do not quench the conviction of the scientist, unless he be of the modern sceptical school, which denies the possibility of any real knowledge, that if he could know the whole, all such apparent contradictions would be resolved in one rationally harmonious, intelligible universe.

A Christian mystery, then, is a fact or truth which, made known by God, and received by an act of faith in His word, faith being an assent of the mind to revealed truth, can be apprehended, and, to more or less extent, be understood, since, as Augustine insists, "Faith leads to understanding," and every Christian mystery is as a spur, inciting the mind to penetrate its depths, so far as is possible in this life. That we cannot comprehend it, in the sense of knowing all about it, is no reason for not knowing what we can, both from what we are told by those to whom it was made known, and by the use of our reason reflecting upon the knowledge thus

conveyed to us. Such a mystery is the Cross, under which term we gather up the whole fact of Calvary, together with the consequences and implications which are contained in, and flow from that fact. For we are dealing with an act which, whilst it took place in the historical order, a point which the Christian Creed emphasizes in saying that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate," could have little meaning for me, a man of the twentieth century, unless it represents, expresses, and contains something of another order which, whilst it encompasses and gives meaning to the order of time, is itself beyond and independent of time. To confine the Cross within the narrow, time-and-space context of "a green hill far away" is to reduce the act which was accomplished there to that of Socrates, or to that of any other notable example of the agelong conflict between devotion to truth and goodness, and "man's inhumanity to man." This is not to undervalue the moral value of the Cross, which has not been without inspiration to many who have not, explicitly, claimed the name of Christian. It is to insist only that the moral value of the act of Calvary has its roots in something far deeper, more real and permanent, something without which, in fact, it would hardly have survived the brief moments of the first Good Friday.

The story of the Cross has so permeated the human consciousness during the Christian centuries that it still exercises an influence even when its truly Christian content has been forgotten, as is largely the case in the present day. It remains like some ancient landmark of whose origin he who passes it daily is ignorant, or like some mediæval shrine which men visit as tourists or archæologists, rather than as pilgrims, recking little of the purpose for which it was erected. For the truth is that when the Cross is not merely situated in time, but confined to time, it shares in the fate of all the things of time, only the shadow of a dying memory remains of the substance of what once was. A vague sentiment mimics a living faith, an emotional pietism persists whilst lacking contact either with heaven or earth.

No truth, or even practice, of the Christian Faith can be understood save as it is seen in relation to the whole content of that Faith. Thus, when a man asks, What does the Cross mean to me? the answer he will give must, and will depend on a question of even wider import, What does Jesus Christ mean to me? For in the answer he gives to the latter question, a man places the Cross in a certain environment, defines his attitude towards it, and

pronounces upon its significance to himself. If to him the name of Jesus Christ means no more than one who may be called the Son of God only in the sense that all men are sons of God, one who, even if he is accorded the highest place among the great teachers and inspirers of the race, is yet solely of that race, then the Cross represents the tragic and undeserved end of a noble life which, however, is not without parallel in the pages of history, both secular and religious. But if, with St. Peter, confronted with the Christ, he answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," or, with St. Thomas and the millions of Christendom, "My Lord and my God," then the Cross becomes to him something unique, pregnant with meaning, far-reaching in consequence, an act divinely human, which has not, nor cannot have, any parallel with which it may be evaluated or compared. An act done in time, it can be understood only in the light of eternity. Its significance will unfold itself as it is seen in relation to the other great Christian facts, notably those of the Incarnation and Resurrection, to which, indeed, the first teachers of the Faith allied it, and consequently to the whole content of that supernatural order which these facts presuppose, and in which they had their origin. No less will it be seen in relation to the fact of sin, not merely that which was the immediate cause of the Passion, but the whole sombre background of a race fallen from its high estate, and unable by any power of its own to recover its lost inheritance.

Two facts are deserving of attention in this connection.

A. The careful reader of the Gospels can hardly fail to notice the striking emphasis laid upon the death of Jesus by each of the Evangelists. In no other "life" or biography of a great man is the author so preoccupied with the death of his hero. He is concerned with his life and activities, his character and career, not with his last moments, except in a few instances where they are made notable by certain circumstances. But the Evangelists, apparently setting out to record the story of the life of Jesus, see that life from the outset as overshadowed by His death. They are themselves astonished at this, since it does not fit in with any of their preconceived ideas of the Messiah. They cannot understand it, and, indeed, revolt from it. "Be it far from Thee, O Lord." But they cannot ignore it, for it is constantly upon the lips of their Master who, to their dismay, ever moves toward it as to a known and destined end. And when it comes, they give it more space, relate its circumstances in greater detail, than they give to

anything else in His life. The Cross becomes central, dominating all that had gone before, and all that followed. It accomplishes a veritable revolution which would be inexplicable were it not seen, not as the end, but only as one step in the development of a life which reaches beyond Calvary, and can be understood only in its extension in what St. Paul will call "the Body of Christ," the Church.

B. With this fact before us, it is with some surprise that we find the Christian Fathers centring their attention, not on the Atonement, but on the Incarnation. It is in the truth which St. John expresses in the Prologue to his Gospel, "The Word was made Flesh," and St. Paul insists upon in such words as "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of God as in a body," that they find all the need of man met and supplied. It is by the taking of human nature, they repeat, that God has saved and united man to Himself. This is not to say that they neglect the Cross, on the contrary they see, what later centuries came to ignore, that it could be understood only in the light of the Incarnation. To them, and to the pagan world, what was supremely important was not the death, but who that Person was who died upon the Cross. And if the Cross has lost much of its influence upon the world of our time, it is because this fact has been so largely ignored or denied. It may be noted that whilst the Church has found it necessary to state the doctrine of the Incarnation in as definite and unmistakable terms as possible, it has not done so with that of the Atonement. For whilst it is necessary that we should know who it is who suffers "for us men and our salvation," it is not necessary for us to see precisely in what way the Passion did so avail us.

What the Cross means to me, then, is—

(1) A divine-human act which derives all its meaning and value from the Personality of Him by whom it was accomplished. By personality I do not mean the individual character which a man acquires by his thought and acts, that which is built up gradually in the course of his life, and distinguishes him from other men. I mean, that which constitutes him a person as distinct from a thing, makes him, in the classical definition of Boethius, "an individual substance of a rational nature," and is the source of that which he becomes by his own acts. In other words, that which we commonly call personality is fruit and consequence of man's being a person from the outset of his existence, an existence due to the fact that he is created by a Personal God.



But when we speak of the Personality of Jesus Christ, we speak of that which is not simply more, but something *other*, than human personality. We speak of a divine Personality, that of Him of whom St. John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us," and St. Paul, that "Though He was divine by nature, He did not set store upon equality with God, but emptied Himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing in human form, He humbly stooped in His obedience even to die, and to die upon the Cross" (Moffatt's translation).

This is not the place to explicate or defend this truth upon which the whole of Christian faith and practice rests, and without which it would be, as the pagans of the second century denounced it, a meaningless superstition. It is sufficient to state it as the primary cause which has raised an instrument of execution, such as is the gallows of our time, to an object of reverence, devotion and love, in which is seen, not the martyrdom of a god-like man, but the death of the God-Man "for us men and for our salvation."

The full meaning, then, of the Cross must be looked for, not in time, but in eternity, not in man, but in God. For no act of any being can be isolated from the nature of that being, since each being acts according to its nature. Thus, the act of Calvary, being the act of God-made-man, has its source and meaning in the Very Being of the Eternal and Unchanging Creator. Immersed in and exhibited in time, surrounded by all the outward and visible circumstances of the Passion, it is neither the consequence of time, nor of human acts, is not born of these passing things of the temporal order. Its origin and cause lie deep in the Mind and Will of the Most High and Holy One, whose name is Love, of whom it is the supreme manifestation upon earth. Nothing which is here displayed to mortal sight is in itself new, unforeseen, unprepared for, or denotes any change in Him, with whom there is "no variableness nor shadow of turning," who has proclaimed, "I am the Lord, I change not." That which we see as a succession of events, and cannot see otherwise, since we are of time, exists whole and simultaneous in that Eternity which God is, and from which all His act, one in itself, proceeds in ways adapted to our nature.

Yet no less is it a truly human act, embraced by the human mind of Jesus, accepted by His human will, carried out in that human nature of which, when the Eternal Word came into the



world He said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." Thus, as says St. Leo the Great in one of his sermons on the Passion," all acts which belong to the God or to the Man, were at once accomplished by Manhood and Godhead, so that while the impossible is present in the possible, neither can strength be effected amid weakness, nor weakness overcome amid strength."

It will hardly be questioned that we learn more by what we see than by what we hear. To be told that God is loving is one thing, to see the Cross is to know that "God is Love," that Love is His very nature; Himself in all that He is and does, so that, not from any necessity either within Himself, or imposed upon Himself from without, but from the free outpouring of the Love which He is, He "so loved the world as to give His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but should have eternal life." St. Paul did not need to be told that "God is loving unto Israel," but it was only the revelation of the Crucified Lord, risen from the dead, which brought to him the conviction, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Here we come to a fact, plain enough in the New Testament, but frequently insufficiently noted, that the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord are of the nature of one act which, from the standpoint of time, began on Maundy Thursday night and was fully accomplished only on Easter Day. For, as we shall see later, the Passion of the Lord is a sacrifice, the oblation of which, in outward, symbolic form, was made in the Upper Room, when He who was both Priest and Victim, Offerer and Offering, took the bread and wine of the Paschal Sacrifice, and pronouncing it to be His Body and Blood, the Body broken and the Blood shed, made that oblation of Himself which He would ratify in the immolation of Himself within the next few hours. But that a sacrifice should be effective, it must not only be offered to, but accepted by God, and it is the Resurrection which marks that acceptance, and makes the sacrifice available for the ends for which it was offered. The death of the Cross alone has but a moral value, it is the Resurrection which gives it that spiritual, life-giving value upon which the whole of Christian teaching is centred. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain."

(2) We have said that the Cross represents an act no less truly human than truly divine. Now, it is of the essence, both of a divine and a human act that it should be freely willed. With God

this cannot be otherwise, but not so in the case of man, since a man may be compelled to act against his will, though when this is the case, his act ceases to be human, in the strict sense of the word. This is still more true with regard to sacrifice. There is a world of difference between the act by which a man sacrifices his life, and that in which it is sacrificed by another. In the case of the soldier dying in battle it might be said that the two are synonymous, but this is not actually so. The essence of the sacrifice is contained in the soldier's willingness to offer himself for his country, not in the act by which that sacrifice is consummated by the enemy.

It is thus that the death and sacrifice of Jesus must be seen. Whether viewed as an act of God or of Man, no thought of any necessity or compulsion must be allowed to blur its freedom, nor must what was done *to* Him by His murderers, be confounded with what was done *by* Him. Seen as an act of God, neither reason nor revelation afford the slightest hint that the Cross implies any tension or conflict in those relations, which we name Persons, since they are personal relations, which constitute the Divine Life. No greater travesty of the truth is conceivable than that which, in total ignorance of what the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity means, envisages the spectacle of an angry Father condemning an innocent and unwilling Son to the death of the Cross. The act of one Person is the act of all, for the distinction of relationship exists within the Unity of Substance, in which Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one in Being, Life, Mind, Will and Love. The Eternal Word, the expression of the Divine Mind, comes to earth in order that He may accomplish in time that Will and Purpose which exists as perfectly in Him as in the Father. "I came not to do Mine own will" as if that were His own in contradistinction to that of His Father, "but the Will of Him who sent Me." His obedience is not that of a servant, but of a beloved Son who has no will other than that of His Father.

Nor is there any conflict between the divine and the human wills in the one Person of the Word made flesh, nor could be, for it is precisely such a conflict of the human with the divine will that constitutes the essential nature of sin. It is not this which we are to see in the agony in the Garden, but the conflict between the lower part of the human soul of Jesus in which, as in every man, reside the passions and emotions, often named the sensitive or sensible will, (*voluntas sensualitatis*), and the higher part of the

soul, the rational mind and will. The distinction is known to all, there is no man who at some time of crisis or danger has not shrunk with a natural, sensible repugnance from the evils which threatened him, whilst at the same time he has been stedfastly resolved to endure them rather than lose his integrity, or sacrifice the end which he had set before himself. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," and the human nature of Jesus shared in that natural weakness, and that natural repugnance to suffering and death which is a consequence of the unnatural character of that sundering apart of soul and body which God made one being. It was not His rational will, but only the sensitive side of His human nature which shrank from the Passion. The very essence of the act of Calvary is stated in the words of Jesus "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." It lies, not merely in the death, but in the willingness to die, for as St. Anselm says, "There is a true and simple obedience only when a rational nature, not by necessity but spontaneously, keeps the will which it has received from God."

(3) What, then, is that divinely-human, freely-willed act which was accomplished upon the Cross?

We have said that the Cross presupposes, and can be understood only in the light of the eternal background of the Mind, and Love, and Purpose of God concerning His rational creature, man. For it is this Eternal Love and Purpose which on Calvary is brought to a point and manifested in time. "So God loved the world." But this carries with it certain truths concerning man, his nature, his condition, and the end for which he was created. These must be stated briefly since space will not allow elaboration or discussion.

Man was created a good thing by nature, and made capable of attaining to the Vision of God, in which lies his perfection, by the gift of grace, which gift was not an essential part of his nature, as were his merely natural powers, but was added to that nature in view of the fact that his final end lay in the supernatural order to which he was incapable of raising himself. Herein lies the whole significance of human life, and of the Christian Faith. It is impossible to understand, or to justify the latter if the doctrine of man's final end is ignored or denied.

By sin man lost, not his natural good, but the gift of grace, and with it, the integrity and wholeness of his nature, which fell into

that condition of disorder, conflict and weakness in which it exists to-day. Man is still a good thing, bearing the image and likeness of his Creator, and destined for a supernatural end, but a good thing gone wrong, warped, misdirected, capable of God but powerless to attain to Him. This is what the term "original sin" means, a deprivation of grace, a loss of righteousness, a forfeiture of that relation to God in which man was created, and of the means by which it might be brought to perfection. By his own act man has exiled himself from his Sovereign Lord and his true country, only by an act of that Lord can he be restored. He has submitted himself to the domination of an enemy, and cannot free himself from his servitude. He has offended the divine Justice by refusing to render to God the honour and obedience due to Him. Thus, as St. Anselm says, as when man voluntarily submits himself to God, he does not confer anything upon God, but "preserves his own rank in the universe, and the beauty of that universe," beauty being a consequence of order, so when he sets himself against God, "he disturbs the beauty and order of the universe," by losing his rightful place in it, whilst by no means escaping from the order of divine Justice which rules all things.

That God has His rights, that which is due to Him simply because He is God, and that man has needs above those of the natural order, are truths which, however foreign to the modern mind, are yet stamped upon any rational conception both of God and of man. These truths meet, and find their fulfilment in the Cross, which, in view of them, must be seen as an act of Justice, of Religion, of Worship, of Sacrifice, and so an act of Redemption, of Propitiation, of Atonement and Reconciliation. "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

An act of Justice, which is a rendering of what is due by right to another, and so an essential element of religion, seen as the means by which man acknowledges God, and renders Him the homage due to Him as God. This is worship, in which man confesses his dependence upon God, and offers himself to Him, exhibiting this interior, spiritual attitude of mind and will by some exterior rite of sacrifice. All justice, all religion, all worship and sacrifice is gathered up in the act of Calvary, wherein "the Man, Christ Jesus," Head and Representative of all humanity, in the nature of man offers Himself not, as we shall come to see, as a substitute for man, but as identified with man as a whole, the

great high-priest "in whose long garment" more truly than in that of the ancient priesthood "was the whole world." Here, upon the Cross, is not "a" man, but the God-Man who gathers together in the purple robe of His Passion, all the children of His Eternal Father, and presents them to Him, thus fulfilling all justice, all religion, Himself both Priest and Victim, Worship and Sacrifice in one.

It is this Godward aspect of the Cross which must first be realised, especially by those whose tendency is to think of it almost entirely in terms of self. The good derived from the Cross is consequent upon the Good which was offered there. It is precisely because it was a Sacrifice offered to God that it becomes a Redemption, a Propitiation, an Atonement and a Reconciliation. Because it was all for God, a perfect rendering of all that man owed to Him, it was all for man. The Gift offered is returned, a benison of divine love and grace, fruit of that tree of death which the Sacrifice of Jesus had transformed into a tree of life, richer in value and consequence than that which adorned man's lost Paradise. It is precisely because it was not the offering of "a" man, but of God-made-Man that its value is infinite, an act worthy, both of Him who offers, and of Him to whom it is offered, an act gaining for man what he could not gain by any power of his own. By it, proclaim the apostolic witnesses, man is redeemed from the slavery of sin, and its eternal consequences of separation from God, and so from his own well-being. By it the wrath of God, which is the passion of Divine Love in relation to sin, is propitiated by Him who "taketh away the sin of the world," undoing the wrong done, the injustice committed. It is an Atonement, by which He who is both God and Man makes man at one again with God, effecting a reconciliation between the exile and the Sovereign Majesty from whom sin had severed him.

But it is more, it is the act by which the possibility and the means of human salvation are secured to man. The reader is reminded that, as we have pointed out, the Passion and the Resurrection must be considered as one act by which the redemption and salvation of man is accomplished. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The distinction between redemption and salvation may be illustrated by that of the deliverance of a slave from captivity, and his being clothed, fed and restored to health by his deliverer. The Cross

redeems, but it is by the life of the Risen Christ that man is saved, brought into a state of health; made a "new creature", by the regenerating, healing, illuminating, and strengthening power of the new life "in Christ" by which, in St. Peter's words, he is made a "partaker of the divine nature," that is, of the divine life and activity. And this salvation, it must be noted, is not merely of the soul, but of the whole nature of man. The New Testament writers plainly reject the Platonic conception of the body as a temporary abode of the soul, which will be discarded at death. There is, indeed, much more about the importance of the body than about that of the soul in their writings, and whether they speak of the Resurrection of Christ, or of the Christian, it is abundantly clear that what they have in mind is primarily the resurrection of the body, and so of human nature in its full integrity. This teaching persists in the early Fathers, one of whom writes about the end of the second century "God calls even the flesh to the resurrection and promises it eternal life. . . . For what is man if not a reasonable being composed of soul and body? Shall we say that the soul alone is man? No, it is the soul of man. And the body by itself—is that man? By no means; we should rather say that it is the body of man. Since, then, neither soul alone nor body alone are man, but the being called man arises out of their union, when God called man to the resurrection and the life, He called no mere part of man, but the whole man, body and soul together in one." (Athenagoras, *de Resurrectione*.)

(4) The Cross represents an act which neither began nor ended on Calvary. For He who hung thereon was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" and who is seen "in the midst of the throne" of heaven, standing "as it had been slain." It is He who is "a Priest for ever," "the great high priest who has passed into the heavens" and "being made perfect, became the Author of salvation unto all them that obey Him." He, too, who is Victim no less than Priest, and who in abolishing all other sacrifices, did not abolish His own sacrifice "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."

Twice during His Passion, Jesus speaks of His mission as being finished, or better, consummated. "I have consummated the work Thou gavest Me to do," which work was to be the glory of His Father in our human nature as He had ever been that glory from all eternity. Again, on the Cross, He cries, "It is consummated." This is a better word than "finished," since the latter is apt to



convey to the mind something done with, brought to an end, even though it also has the sense of something accomplished in view of a future purpose, as, for example, a house is finished in order to be lived in. But consummated accentuates the sense of an act in which all that is necessary has been gathered up into a single point in full accomplishment to the end that it may be accessible, available, ready for use, as the water gathered in a reservoir to be poured out upon a thirsty land.

The Sacrifice of the Cross was such an act, full, perfect, and complete, to which nothing could be added by any act of man. For it was not, as we have said, an act of "a" man, but of "the" Man, in whose Person all humanity was embraced, every sacrifice comprised, every sorrow and suffering endured, every cry of the human heart caught up in and echoed from the heart of Jesus in His Passion. An act, not finished so as to remain as a memory only of what once was, but in its very reality and truth to be established for all time on earth which it had made so one with heaven. To the Christian, the Cross means not merely something of the past, but that which is of the living present, since its inner essence is of that eternity which encompasses and contains all the present. "We ought," says St. Leo, "rather to honour the Lord's Passover as present, than remember it as past."

In the opening words of *The Acts of the Apostles*, St. Luke speaks of "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach," the continuation and application of which he then proceeds to record, in which task he will be followed by Post-Apostolic writers. He is most concerned as a historian with the exterior progress of the Church as it carries on into the world "all that Jesus began." St. Paul will be more concerned with the nature and inner life both of the Church, the Body of Christ, and of the individual members of that Body. To him Christ and the Church, His Body on earth, are one, the latter is the divinely ordained medium in and through which the Head exercises His authority and power, teaches, and confers His gifts upon men. The natural Body of the Lord which was born of Mary, suffered on the Cross, rose from the dead, has passed from human sight, but the mystical Body of the Crucified and Risen Christ remains, the πλήρωμα, the complement, the completeness, or that which completes the Christ, and His work.

This Pauline conception of what St. Augustine calls "the whole Christ," conveys no implication of any lack or insufficiency in the Person and Work of Christ, it but emphasizes and makes



plain the actuality of the union which the Cross has made possible between the redeemed and the Redeemer. Made by baptism a member of Christ's Body, "baptized into Christ . . . into His death . . . crucified with Christ . . . risen in Him . . . alive unto God through Him," the Christian is "another Christ," in the words of the Fathers, one who, as St. Paul does not hesitate to say, fills up on his part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church.

The full mystery and meaning of the Cross is not confined within the truth that one suffers for the many, but lies in the fact that the many must suffer in the One. For in the phrase of Irenæus, Christ "recapitulates" all men in Himself, and Augustine will constantly repeat that "The Saviour of the body and the members of the body are two in one flesh, in one voice, and in one passion . . . so the Passion of Christ is not in Christ alone; and yet the Passion is in Christ alone. For if in Christ you consider both the Head and the Body, then the Passion is in Christ alone; but if by Christ you mean only the Head, then it is not in Christ alone." The truth is that whilst there is not, and cannot be, any passion or suffering in heaven, the Passion of the Lord does go on in the members of His Body on earth, not only in the supreme Christian sacrifice which, portrayed in the Crucifix, is actually offered by the Church upon her altars, when the Body obeying the command of its Head, does what He did and offers what He offered, but also, in every sacrifice, every suffering, whether of the Body as a whole, or of each member of the Body individually. "Christ continues still to suffer in His members, that is, in us," says Augustine.

Thus the Cross means much more than an act done *for* man, it means an act to be done in and by man. It is not something to be gazed at, or believed in merely, but something in which men are to participate. Faith in the Cross does not stop at an assent to the act accomplished thereon, it lays hold upon that act, identifies itself with it, seeks its gifts, not as rewards, but as the means of conformity to its demands. In the face of death faith embraces life, for the supreme gift of the Cross is life. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," and can thus cry with the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

So, just as it is in the light of the Incarnation that we begin to

see the meaning of the Cross, it is in that of the doctrine of the Body of Christ, and of each member of that Body "in Christ," that its fulness is revealed. The redemption accomplished on the Cross for all men becomes the salvation offered to each, the act done there in the Person of Christ, becomes the act to be shared in by each of the members of His Body, and offered by that Body as its supreme act of worship, thanksgiving, propitiation, and prayer.

Does all this sound remote, recondite, far from any real relation to the deep and poignant tragedy of our day? Or do we see it as our greatest need, the answer to our most heartfelt prayer? What other, indeed, shall be given to the cry of humanity, its heart broken upon altars of its own devising, its children sacrificed to the idols which we have created but to mock our foolishness? Who is there who fails to see that our world hangs upon a cross because it evaded or denied that Cross by which alone the very things men seek—peace, justice, freedom, life—may be attained? If we are in danger of losing our earthly paradise, is it not because we have forgotten the Paradise of God from which all its beauty is derived, that Paradise in which there stands for ever the "tree of life" whose leaves "are for the healing of the nations?"

Men have called the War a Crusade, but there can be no Crusade without the Cross, and that, not thought of as a mere battlecry, or as a standard fluttering above our heads, but known as a reality enthroned in our hearts. That so, the sacrifice we make, the suffering we endure, the warfare we wage, indelibly bearing the marks of the Passion of the Crucified, shall become a fruitful seed which shall ripen into no less a harvest than that of "a new heaven and a new earth."

BEDE FROST.

# 5

A. E. GARVIE

## I

THE title of this volume promises a treatment of the subject from the standpoint of individual experience; and this expectation I shall endeavour to fulfil, as it is the standpoint from which it has been, ought to be, and will be by me regarded: (1) The experience of the Apostle Paul of so immediate a contact, so intimate a communion, and so intense a self-identification with Christ as Saviour and Lord that he could describe the new creation in him by faith in the grace of God as crucifixion and resurrection with Christ may be regarded as typical, as the highest to which all Christians can aspire, if not many can attain in the same degree. In all the believers who have most influenced the history of the Christian Church for fuller life, the Cross has been in experience the focus of light and heat—the truth and grace of Christ—Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley. So approaching the subject we are “compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising shame” (Heb. xii. 1-2).

(2) When we try to turn experience into doctrine, to account to reason for the content of our faith, we confront a painful surprise. There is no œcumenical dogma of the atonement as of the person of Christ, generally and permanently accepted as authoritative. There have been a number of conflicting theories, into the history of which it is not necessary for me to enter, although I have in my thinking given to them the consideration they deserve as sincere and devout efforts to understand what in its glorious mystery we can know only in part and see “darkly as in a mirror.” All have seen in the Cross God’s action and passion to save men from sin and its consequent evils.

(3) Christian theology, which seeks to mediate in current thought and words the eternal truth of God as revealed in history and recorded in the Holy Scriptures to each age, must needs be sensitive and responsive to the contemporary intellectual environment. Last century witnessed what can be described as a mental

revolution, owing chiefly to the discoveries of science, the commendation of its methods by its triumphs, the extension of those methods to other spheres of enquiry, sometimes without the necessary modifications. As it is the purpose of this volume in presenting the Cross in individual experience to deal with the subject as affected by modern thought, the influences that affected Christian theology must be briefly mentioned: (i) The literary and historical criticism of the Holy Scriptures was the application with due reserves of the methods of science to history and literature. It delivered Christian theology from dogmatic bondage to the letter which misled to intellectual freedom in the Spirit to interpret the Divine Revelation, the Word of God, with which these writings are not indetical, but which they contain and by the enlightening of the Spirit convey to Christian faith. God reveals Himself to men in and by men, in human experience of His presence and activity. What we must ask is, What did God mean to, and make of each prophet, each apostle, and even Christ Himself? By such an approach we can sever the divine revelation, universal and permanent in its value, from the human conditions of thought and life, by which its temporary and local conveyance was affected. The approach of this essay, indicated at the outset, is thus in accord with the method of Biblical criticism.

(ii) This severance put an end to the futile controversy between theology and science, which so adversely affected the authority and the influence of the Christian Church. The doctrine of man and sin, the Fall, total depravity, original sin, based on Gen. iii, may now be regarded as an anachronism; but the reality of sin and its universality and continuity in mankind depend on the convincing evidence of history and experience in which every man has a witness in himself and not in any theory of its origin. I myself believe that Christian theology may learn much to its advantage from the sciences, biology, anthropology, psychology and sociology, and can offer an intelligible and, therefore, credible doctrine of man and sin to modern thought. The doctrine of Atonement is not in its essential content in any way affected by any such modification of its traditional dogmatic context. The Cross means in individual experience all it does, not because Adam fell, but because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). For the necessity of the Atonement Paul appeals to empirical evidence, and uses the story of the Fall only as an illustration of the truth that "where sin abounded, grace did

abound more exceedingly" (V. 20). Christ means more good to mankind than Adam evil.

(4) The recognition in the two ways just mentioned of the human limitations of the record, as historical and literary, of the divine revelation led to a widening of the interest of Christian theologians in the Holy Scriptures of other religions, and in the religions of mankind generally. A study of this subject has led me to the conviction, that not only is the divine revelation in the Christian Bible superior to any in other religions, and alone has supreme and absolute value, but also that God has had a wider witness, has really revealed Himself whenever and wherever sincere religion was able to receive and respond to Him. God's light did shine in the darkness, and if the darkness did not fully *apprehend* the light, it did not altogether *overcome* it (John i. 5, R.V., marg.). (i) There is one use which has been made of the Comparative Study of Religions by even conservative theologians. The prevalence of the practice of sacrifice, human and animal, in the religions of the world has been cited as a proof of the necessity of Christ's death. I have surveyed this evidence, and estimated its significance in an essay on "Sin, Sacrifice and Atonement in the Religions of the World and the Cross of Christ" (*The Christian Certainty and the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 77-107). While the institution of sacrifice is an impressive evidence of a wide-spread human need, which Christ alone has met, the Old Testament itself does depreciate the value of such sacrifice apart from repentance and reform, Psalm 51 described "the broken and the contrite heart" as God's acceptable sacrifice, and denies that God desires any other (verses 16 and 17). The liturgical addition (verses 18 and 19) is an anti-climax to a lower level of religion. In the Vision of the Righteous Servant of the Lord in Isa. lii. 13-liii. 12 who saves by his self-sacrifice, we have the consummation of the Old Testament teaching on sacrifice and on anticipation of the New Testament Gospel. The *Epistle to the Hebrews* presents the whole ritual system as an earthly shadow of which Christ alone is the heavenly substance. I myself hold that we must interpret the Cross of Christ solely and wholly in the light of the Son's revelation of the Father, and that analogies from ritual sacrifices, Jewish or pagan, may mislead.

(ii) The proper approach from the religions to the Cross is to ask, What human needs does religion disclose? Man in his ignorance and impotence to understand and control the mighty forces,

which affected his life for weal or woe was held by wonder and fear; and he found deliverance in belief and trust in superhuman and supernatural powers, conceived more or less as personal, superior to himself in knowledge and power, and able to help him, if he used the proper means to gain their favour, or avert their displeasure. In his wonder he expressed his ignorance, in his fear his impotence, and sought compensation for both in his religion. This is the point of contact between the religions of the world and the Cross of Christ in its revelation of God and redemption of man, thus imparting both knowledge and power. We may now turn to the New Testament witness.

## II

The Fourth Gospel in the description of the Son as the true and the living way gives the assurance that in His truth He imparts the knowledge man needs to approach God, and in His life the power to make that approach (John xiv. 6). Paul approaches the Cross of Christ in the same way. Christ is the power of God, which the Jews seek in signs, and the wisdom of God, the Greeks crave (1 Cor. i. 22-4). There is a need, however, that the religions of the world do not adequately disclose: and only the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures brings home effectively to the conscience of mankind: it is man's sin, and his need of forgiveness and deliverance by God. This supreme good of salvation from sin is disclosed to man's knowledge, and imparted in the power of the new life, which comes in the grace of Christ. "If any man is in Christ," Paul witnesses, "he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). (1) Paul describes this new creation in its negative aspect as Crucifixion, and its positive aspect as Resurrection with Christ. Through the Cross, in which he glories, the world hath been crucified to him, and he to the world (Gal. vi. 14). The world of which he was specially thinking was unbelieving and persecuting Judaism, estranged from and disobedient to God (Rom. x). He repudiated all in it that had been his pride (Phil. iii. 4-8), and it repudiated him as an apostate and pursued him with deadly hatred (Acts xxi-xxvi). Crucifixion is for him, because the Cross was so central to his faith, both the pattern and the power of this mutual severance of Judaism and himself as now in Christ a new creature. Likewise the Resurrection is the efficacious symbol of the positive content of the change, all the



things that have become new. As in the experience of Christ Himself Crucifixion and Resurrection were a necessary sequence, so for Paul death to the old and quickening to the new life were bound together. "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). The love of Christ in His sacrifice brought the dominant motive into his life, and he assumes into the lives of other believers. "The love of Christ," i.e. His love for us, not ours for Him, although that is our response "constraineth us" holds us in, is the channel in which life's current flows, "because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died," i.e. all were crucified with Christ, "that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again (2 Cor. v. 14-15), so that they too might rise with Him "to walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4, 5). The Cross not only brings new knowledge, religious convictions about God, man, duty and destiny, but new power, moral character is transformed by the new motive—the love of Christ, and the indwelling and inworking of the Holy Spirit.

(2) This presentation of the Christian life as Crucifixion and Resurrection with Christ assumes an immediate contact, an intimate communion, and intense self-identification with the Saviour and Lord which few Christians can attain. It has been described as Paul's *faith mysticism*, and Paul's impassioned language has often a mystical note; but Paul was not a mystic in ever desiring or claiming such an absorption of himself into Christ that the one personality lost its identity and continuity, and was impersonally merged in the other. The passage I have quoted from Gal. iii. 20 at once corrects the impression which his claim that he no longer lives, but Christ lives in him might make by the explanation that he lives that life by faith in the Son of God and His sacrifice. Faith is confidence in, dependence on and submission to another, but not absorption, not loss of personality in another.

(3) I have described the apostle's experience in his own vivid language, not merely as supplying an authoritative Scripture basis for my own exposition of what the Cross means to me, but as expressing for me typically for all time the distinctive Christian experience, which, however imperfectly, it has been the highest religious gain of my life to share. I cannot claim to have had the vivid vision of the Risen Lord that the Apostle could, due to the



revelation given to him at his conversion, although for me God is always apprehended in Christ; and I do not feel the need in experience of distinguishing the persons, as do the Creeds. Paul had far less knowledge of the earthly ministry, the Jesus of history, than we have through the Gospels. It is the Jesus of history that gives its content to the vision of the Risen Lord for me, and I have tried to describe and express the value of the historical reality, what Jesus thought, felt and did in this filial relation to God, and His gracious, sacrificial relation to men, in my book, *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*. To this highest theme I shall return in the last section.

(4) This account of what the Cross meant to Paul has affinity with what is generally known as the *moral influence* theory of the Atonement, of which the most noted exponent was Abelard. In this the emphasis is laid on the appeal of the love of God forgiving sins in the Cross of Christ, by which distrust and disobedience in man are changed to repentance and faith. The Cross has such an appeal, but does that exhaust its significance? As the *subjective* aspect, the influence of the Cross on man, it is altogether true. It is only necessary sacrifice and not merely spectacular, as any apart from necessity would be that is an evidence of love which appeals to the heart. What was the necessity for that sacrifice, its objective aspect? is the question which we must now try to answer.

### III

Although the Pauline approach, to which the moral influence theory can appeal, is also mine by preference, it is not that common in Christian dogmatic theories: and we must try to discover the complementary truth these hold. There, too, Paul can be our guide. I believe that the core of his individual experience is expressed in Rom. vi-viii, yet he is expressing his own convictions also in Rom. i-v. The theories of the Atonement of the objective type which seek to prove how the Cross affects God as well as influences man have a preference for Rom. i-v. (1) The argument in Rom. i-v was determined in its form, in its ideas and terms, by the necessity the apostle felt to justify his Gospel to the Judaisers to overcome their suspicion and opposition. The death of Christ had to be related to the righteousness, law and judgment of God as held by Judaism, and this Jewish conception of God is not to be depreciated and dismissed as

entirely superseded by the Christian. It contains essential and permanent truth which must be taken up into the Christian. Paul was not here accommodating himself to Jewish prejudices, but meeting a difficulty that he himself felt. It is the truth of ethical monotheism, developed in the Hebrew prophets, accepted and approved by Jesus, integral to the Christian conception of God, and to be modified only in so far as the distinctive and original revelation of the Father by the Son demands.

(2) What we must retain is the dominating faith in God's holiness. His absolute perfection which on the one hand distinguishes and even appears to separate Him from man, but which on the other hand in the Christian conception is also represented as *communicative* and is shewn in the love that seeks the lost, and the grace which saves to the uttermost in uttermost sacrifice in the Cross of Christ. God's holiness, however, reacts to sin not only, although chiefly, in love and grace, but also in righteousness the essential opposition of holiness to sin, and in judgment and punishment where love and grace are refused and resisted. It is the failure to recognize the righteousness of God adequately that is the weakness, moral and religious, of much modern theology. God's love is represented as good nature, acquiescent in, tolerant to and compromising with sin, offering a forgiveness, a restoration of loving relations with sinners, whether or not they turn from their sins in penitence, and rely only on God for salvation in faith.

(3) It is because the Reformers did not adequately recognize the uniqueness of the revelation in Christ, nor adequately distinguish the authority of the Old and the New Testament, that their conception of God, on which their theories of the Atonement were based, was not adequately modified. In all my thinking about God I am guided by one principle: I will not believe anything about God that is inconsistent with the revelation of the Fatherhood by the Son, whether it have Scripture authority or not, and I will believe anything that seems a necessary deduction from that doctrine. In the popular presentation of the older conception of God a dualism was introduced into the very nature of God in contrasting righteousness and grace, assigning the one to the Father and the other to the Son. The death of Christ was then conceived as a *propitiation* in the sense of pagan sacrifices as the efficacious means of turning away God's wrath and turning it into favour. For this view Paul's teaching about *propitiation* in Romans iii. 25 was appealed to; and we must accordingly examine

not only the one statement, but the whole argument in the context.

(4) There is reason for rendering the word translated *propitiation* (noun) by *propitiatory* (adjective) and giving it a more general sense than the noun would indicate. While Paul may have had in his mind the use of the word to describe pagan sacrifices as the means whereby the displeasure of a god or gods might be changed to favour; yet this is unlikely, because holding the monotheism of the prophets he would not think of God as changeable, because the Hebrew sacrifices were regarded as appointed by God Himself under His covenant with His people as the means of restoring the sinner to the relation which had by his transgression been disturbed, and because the argument in the context requires not a change of disposition or purpose, but of method in dealing with sinners. "God had passed over in the time of His forbearance sins previously committed" (Rom. iii. 25; cf. Acts xvii. 30—the times of this ignorance God winked at, A.V.; "overlooked," R.V.). Now in Christ He offers to all men forgiveness, which is more than forbearance, not a passing over, winking at, overlooking, but a cancelling, annulling, blotting out, a justification by faith or holding sinners who believe as righteous. That change of method must be itself justified if God's justice or righteousness was to be maintained and demonstrated. Since judgment no longer falls on men, it is displayed in a more impressive and convincing way. Christ bore it upon His Cross.

(5) This vindication of God's righteousness on the Cross is regarded as the *objective aspect* of the Atonement in contrast to the moral influence of the love of God in forgiving as the *subjective aspect*. (i) An antithesis is made between the Cross as it influences man and as it affects God: this as many other theological antitheses I hold to be false. If man is created in God's likeness for God's fellowship this affinity of nature in community of life involves that the Cross ought to mean to man what it does mean to God: its human value must depend on its divine significance; for man ought to respond in penitence to God's judgment, and in faith to God's grace, or, as these should not be separated, in one act of surrender to God, of which there are the negative and the positive aspects (Crucifixion and Resurrection). The whole of God's holiness, righteousness as well as love or grace, must be apprehended in the Cross, if the whole man is to make so whole a surrender. For man's sake it was necessary for God thus to reveal

Himself. But we must go further, and try to discover and disclose why such a revelation was necessary to God's nature, character, purpose. Paul's argument may be further developed.

(ii) The natural and the moral order of the world in which sinners appear to escape the full measure of the penalty that they deserve, might tempt men to regard God's forbearance as indulgence, His mercy as indifference. In taking the initiative in offering men a salvation which they have not and could not earn, God must shew forth in the clearest way possible to Him His own nature, character, purpose, not to impress men only, but to express Himself in His condemnation of sin no less than in His compassion for sinners. May two human analogies be excused? If there is the likeness and fellowship between God and man which has been insisted on they are not altogether irrelevant. A man may sometimes pass over a slander, but there may be occasions when higher interests than his own reputation demand that he should clear his character from reproach. While there is no law, distinct from and superior to God, but God's perfection is ultimate reality, as Ruler and Judge He owes it to Himself to make that perfection manifest, even as does the human judge or ruler maintain the authority of the law. While I recognize as true the objective aspect of the Atonement, and the validity of Paul's argument, and shall in the last section try to show that Jesus Himself vicariously experienced the divine judgment on sin. I must insist that the presentation in Rom. i-v as developed in Christian dogmatics has an *externality*, which needs to be made more *internal* to Christian experience by the presentation in Rom. vi-viii. This, however, I may add: my conscience would not allow me to reverence and adore the God who did not preserve and proclaim in His world His eternal perfection as the holiness which is both righteousness and love, self-sustaining and self-communicating.

#### IV

From the apostle we pass in closing to the Lord Himself. (1) What did the Cross mean to Him? From the beginning Jesus anticipated the fulfilment of His vocation in sacrifice, for He conceived it as presented in the vision of the Righteous Servant of the Lord who by His suffering saves (Isa. lii. 13-liii. 12. I have offered the proof of this statement in full detail in the book already mentioned, *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 317-35).

His whole ministry of teaching and healing was a ministry of grace, He "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). He had authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark ii. 10) and He exercised that authority with such certainty as to command the confidence of sinners. To the sinful woman He could say: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke vii. 48-50). On the Cross He prayed: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (xxiii. 34). Does this instance indicate that His authority was due to His assurance of answered prayer, implicit or explicit? On several occasions He foretold His death, and there are two pregnant sayings, the authenticity of which there is no good ground to doubt, which indicate the meaning of it for Him. "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many" (Mark xiv. 24). In the immediate context of the "ransom" passage, the bondage from which His death was to bring deliverance was the false aims and hopes of the disciples regarding the Kingdom of God, which they shared with their fellow countrymen. What He offered was a spiritual Kingdom, God's saving sovereignty: what they desired was a secular Kingdom, an earthly ruler, victorious and prosperous, and so Barabbas was preferred to Jesus. The way of self was chosen instead of the Will of God. In the universal reference of His sacrifice, therefore, it is *redemption* from sin and its consequences that it brings. Those who in faith receive His grace are crucified to the world. What the "covenant" passage, with its implicit reference to the new covenant foretold by Jer. xxxi. 33-34, made explicit in 1 Cor. xi. 25, indicates is a changed relation to God or *reconciliation*. Not only are offences pardoned, but God's law is put in the heart.

(2) In the first passage the term *ransom* is a metaphor and not a definition, and we need not ask, to whom is the ransom paid? To God as Anselm and the Reformers held? Or to the devil, as some of the Fathers taught? The stress is on the experience of *redemption*, deliverance from bondage. What truth is preserved in the reference of the ransom to God has already been dealt with in the discussion of propitiation. The stress should be on the deliverance, and we should think of it as broadly as possible. It is deliverance from the habits of sin, from the consequences so far as change of life modifies or removes them, from the dread of death, from the anticipation of God's judgment, from the sense of impotence to

control circumstances, in short from all the evils, of which sin is the sting. Dangers awaken fears, and fears move to flight, and faith is the flight to God. *Redemption* is the negative aspect of salvation: it points to the old things that have passed away. *Reconciliation*, the idea expressed in the metaphor of the new covenant, is the positive aspect, the assurance that all things are new. For distrust of God there is confidence, for estrangement love, for disobedience submission. Men are at peace with God. There is inner harmony, the conflict of the higher with the lower self is being carried on toward victory, "to them that love God all things work together for good" (Rom. viii. 28); and nothing can separate them "from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord" (verses 35, 39). It was with the authority and in the name of God that Jesus offered the grace of God to men as redemption from sin, and reconciliation unto God and for both His death, according to His own self-witness, was necessary. On the Cross, as His prayer for His enemies (Luke xxiii. 34) and His assurance to the penitent (verse 43) show He was still mediating the love of God to men in His own grace. There is no need of proving that the Cross declares the love of God in Christ as forgiveness and renewal.

(2) It is much more difficult to shew how it also reveals God's judgment, as objective doctrines of the Atonement assert truly, as I have tried to shew. The agony in Gethsemane and the dereliction on the Cross, if we take them as seriously as we ought, compel us to recognise with awe that what He tasted in His death, the cup which He prayed might be taken from Him, and yet in submission to God's will accepted in Gethsemane and drank to its dregs on Calvary, was something infinitely more mysterious and terrible than the physical event of death alone could be to the Sinless Son of God, but was the spiritual experience of feeling Himself forsaken of God, for His cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Mark xv. 34) must have meant infinitely more to Him than it could to the Psalmist. Dare we reverently try to penetrate the mystery? On the one hand, if we recall the historical antecedents of His death, the loss of His popularity with the people, because they did not desire what He offered them, the opposition of the Pharisees, the hostility of the rulers, the fickleness and weakness of His disciples, the betrayal by Judas, the denial by Peter, the weakness and cowardice of Pilate, the choice of Barabbas, the mockery that pursued Him even on the Cross,



we must believe that there came to Him an *apocalypse of sin*, such as no sensitive human conscience has ever before experienced; and His was more than a sensitive human conscience, His was the infallible divine discernment of the reality of sin, how contrary to the character of God, how challenging of His purpose, how hateful to His love, how destructive of all the good that God meant man to become! How overwhelming of His emotions must have been this combination of the *apocalypse of sin*, and the *revelation of God's judgment* on sin. So intense was His love for sinful mankind that, Himself sinless and sharing God's judgment on sin, He did not separate Himself, but in self-identification with the race He loved, He felt the shame and the sorrow that they should have felt, had they shared His vision, as His very own. Thus do saints suffer with and for sinners in vicarious love taking their very place, and how immeasurably more He who loved as no other has ever loved. There are limits to human consciousness, and one overwhelming emotion suppresses and excludes others; all He could feel at the moment was His identity with sinful mankind under God's judgment. Thus while His cry was a prayer of faith, God was still real to Him, all that God's Fatherhood had meant for Him was hidden by that dark cloud from Him. Thus in love for God and man He bore in His heart the sin of the world, and He bore it away (John i. 29).

"Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken—  
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'  
It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,  
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!"

E. B. BROWNING: *Cowper's Grave*.

In looking unto Jesus on His Cross with an adoration and gratitude "too deep for tears", still more for words, we must not fall into the error already noted of separating Christ from God, the Father from the Son, as though God inflicted, and Christ accepted such a judgment on sin. Although Calvin insists that Christ tasted "for us eternal death and damnation"—the infernal penalty, yet even he "guards against the idea that God was ever *adversarius* or *iratus* (hostile or angry) in relation to Christ" (Denney's *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 263). The Incarnate Word felt Himself forsaken, when God was so near, that at once faith triumphs over despair, and He commits Himself to the Father



(Luke xxiii. 46). God was in Gethsemane and on Calvary as always "reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19). The Cross is God's passion (His self-propitiation) in human history for the redemption of mankind from sin, and the reconciliation unto Himself.

A. E. GARVIE.

## 6

JOHN A. HUGHES

APPROACHING this subject as I do from the angle of a member of the Society of Friends, what I have to say must to a large extent be a personal statement, arrived at through personal experience and conviction. This is not to deny the weight and influence of the testimony of the Saints, of the Church, the Scriptures, or Christian tradition. No true or balanced judgment indeed can be made on any Christian truth which does not take them into proper account. Nevertheless, seeing that the Society of Friends makes no specific credal demands from its members, anything they care to say on Christian truth must be largely a matter of personal "convincement." The strength and weakness of this position I will not now discuss; but it means in my own case that my contribution may well fall far short of orthodox evangelical doctrine.

But shall I then be in worse case than my fellow Christians at this time, considering the general hesitancy with which the Cross is preached? I doubt it. Christian truth has long been under a cloud; and whilst there are signs of a recovery of faith, none of us, as it seems to me, can yet claim we have reached our goal. There is a second matter which has to do with my position as a Friend and which is of great importance in itself, and that is the doctrine of salvation as held by the mystics of all times. Since the emphasis of the Quakers is largely a mystical one it is only natural that the doctrine should have found a home amongst them and that it should have conditioned their attitude to the Cross. It can best be stated, and the dilemma which it raises, by a question which was put to me by a Friend some years ago. "If in the soul of each one of us there dwells the Light of God Himself, and if by the operation of that Light we are saved, what need was there for the historic death of Christ on the Cross for the world's redemption and for mine?" It is a question which so far as my knowledge goes has never been fully answered. Perhaps it cannot be. But in looking for the true answer Friends have long felt that the "mystery" and the "history" must both be kept in view, i.e. the subjective experience of God's Light in the soul, illuminating and redeeming, and

the objective fact of the historic Cross, and that no true answer can be found apart from either.

How great a place the Cross has actually occupied in the thought of Friends can readily be seen in their writings. Fox is orthodox amongst the orthodox. "Christ Jesus was made a sacrifice for sin," "tasted death for every man, shed his blood for all men." He found no conflict between such ideas and his own inner experience of the saving Light. For this Light was strictly related in his mind to the historic Christ. It was *his* Light that he and others like him knew, and by which they were redeemed. Therefore he directs them to the "Light of Christ and the Spirit of God," "to Christ Jesus who died for them that they might hear him, and receive salvation by him." The living Christ who died, and the Light they knew were one.

In the exuberance of the rediscovery of the Inward Light at the time of Quaker beginnings many of Fox's contemporaries had thrown off what must have seemed to them the trammels of the Cross, either as a historic fact, or as a principle of living. The result was the moral excesses of the Ranters and others. But Fox was not like that. He saw that the soul can never be "above" the Cross, freed from its necessities, therefore his injunction to all was to "keep in the daily cross by which," to quote his own words, "you may witness all that to be crucified which is contrary to God, and which shall not come into his kingdom." No cross, there could be no crown. But let us observe that neither here nor elsewhere were the inner experiences and the outer fact brought together in a comprehensive scheme of thought.

Amongst the vast numbers of Quaker witnesses who might be called to testify to the mystical experience of salvation I will confine myself to Job Scott, the 18th century New England Quaker. "The true doctrine of salvation has ever been, in all ages, Christ in man the hope of glory; a real union of the life of God and the life of man, and therein a blessed harmonious co-operation." It is thus that souls are indeed transformed: and not only is this doctrine strictly scriptural and orthodox, with the great weight of the New Testament behind it, but it has world-wide recognition of its validity. Robert Barclay recognized the universality of the experience of the "secret touches of the holy light" in the soul whereby, as he says, we are "enlivened and quickened," and thereby "secretly united to God," even though we have not learned to invoke the name of Christ.

I note the recent emphasis on this condition of salvation in one of a series of booklets dealing with Christian apologetics. The writer, an Anglo-Catholic, finds the meaning of the Kingdom of God, of prayer, and the whole range of Christian life and experience to lie in union with Christ. Thus only, he claims, is the natural self redeemed and raised to a supernatural level.

Furthermore, true to his major premise, he defines eternal life, the life of the Kingdom, as capable of enjoyment now. It is the note of the Fourth Gospel, as of all those who share in its secret. The whole experience of the Christian is timeless, or rather timeless-temporal, for he lives in two worlds at once. Christ is the hope of glory now: the supernatural is known in the natural now, and in this lies salvation.

Forensic schemes of redemption do not thrive in such a spiritual climate; and as the history of Quakerism shows it is only as Friends have lost this mystic sense that they have turned to such schemes. One example of the tendency involved will suffice to illustrate the point. After the deadness of the 18th century Friends were only too thankful to enjoy the warmth and glow of the Evangelical Revival as others were, and to accept its theories of sin and salvation. But there came a significant shift of accent. The conviction of glory, of eternal life, as a present experience changes to the thought of glory hereafter. Joseph John Gurney, a typical "evangelical" Friend, born in 1788, will point the difference for us. "When we reflect," he writes, "on the unutterable importance of eternity," (How it stretches its infinite length in such a mode of thought!) "on the value of never-dying souls, on the pains of hell, and on the joys of heaven, we cannot deny that to dwell on essential, saving truth" is our main business. The emphasis is other-worldly, and it may be noted perhaps without astonishment that amongst Friends of this type the doctrine of the Inner Light came under deep suspicion, and that the test of "soundness" was the acceptance or not of the "offices of Christ," and the "full" scheme of salvation. The choice was evidently felt to be either, or.

What bridge can be found between the inward experience of salvation as defined, and salvation won through the death of Christ on the Cross? Perhaps none that is complete, and we have to carry in our minds two ideas apparently incompatible. That need not cause any dismay, for the truth of our whole lives, of the universe, of God Himself, lies in a series of blinding paradoxes. The crowning mistake has been to imagine that the key to them

lies in logic. That is false: the solution is only found in living. The presumed opposition between Eternity and time, pre-destination and free-will, as well as all the other paradoxes of religious life and thought dissolve before our actual experience of living in two worlds at once, true amphibians; at home in the world of length and breadth, of depth and height, the world of the natural and the supernatural at one and the same time.

This is true of the doctrine of the Cross. Whatever contradiction may seem to exist between the outer and the inner aspects of it find their resolution as we live in the Spirit of the Cross.

Viewed objectively the principle of the Cross is seen to be the prime condition of all life and its achievements. Thus on the material level there is a twofold process, upward and downward—two tendencies which cross one another. "The downward journey," says Sir James Jeans, "is easy, while the upward is either hard or impossible." It is in accordance with what scientists call the second law of thermodynamics that the downward tendency occurs. There is a vast cosmic drag, down towards the grave: and if we may trust Sir James Jeans, the time will come when all active movement in the universe will have come to an end in cosmic death.

But no true picture of the universe can be got which does not take due account of the "upward thrust" which goes on without ceasing, converting the falling energy, and only able to convert it because it is falling, into the myriad forms of life, order and beauty. But the struggle is in the true sense awful. There is a vast inertia to be overcome, a brute resistance, against which the loving, creating mind of God must struggle, and wins only at the price of the Cross. So that the true symbol of God in relation to the physical universe is a "poor, mocked and wounded God" such as the Cross of history exhibits.

On the level of human achievement we know the universality of the principle. The saying of Jesus, "He that loseth his life shall save it," is no mere pietism, but the bedrock fact of all experience. It is indeed the meek who possess the earth: those who spend themselves and are ready to be spent for what is higher than they. In science, music, business, home life, statesmanship, we need much more than cleverness to gain the crown of life. Aldous Huxley has told us that the "best works of literary, plastic, and musical art give us more than mere pleasure; they furnish us with information" (mark the word!) "about the nature of the world . . .

something significant about the ultimate reality behind appearance." They are in other words works of revelation, filled with meaning. But I do not think he anywhere makes it clear that works such as these, Macbeth for example, or the Hammerclavier Sonata, and the haunting, slow movements of Beethoven's last compositions, or the sculptures and wall paintings of Michel Angelo, to name only a few, have had to be paid for in the currency of the Cross. Jacob's ladder is not to be mounted without cost.

On the moral and spiritual level I can think of no more impressive example than Lear. The tragedy records his Gethsemane and Golgotha—and his Easter Day. In Granville Barker's telling phrase he enters the play "more a magnificent portent than a man: a massive fortress of pride which calls itself Lear." At the end he is the very incarnation of redeemed humanity, filled with pity and divine compassion for the poor, the sinner, and all the suffering world of men. It is almost more than the heart can bear to follow him from one abyss of suffering and pain to another, until all his pride has been purged out of him, and stripped of all earthly trappings he knows himself to be no more than "a very foolish, fond old man." But this downward curve is crossed by the upward one of his soul's ascent, and it is as rich in poverty that we must always remember him. He has found life indeed, but only through death.

But to what extent can it be said that the vicarious element enters in in the examples I have given? Is the answer not clear? In the first place these events belong to the world of reality, for ever passed into the corporate treasury of the race, and available for all who have the key to unlock it. They have been won on our behalf, vicariously; sometimes consciously, as when Beethoven strove to tell mankind in his Ninth Symphony what joy was. The price they have cost their creators, who can say? Who knows, for example, what Golgotha Shakespeare endured as the price of Lear? As one of our best critics has said it almost cost his sanity. The key to the gate of the treasury—the key of David as Penn called it—is ours only on the condition that we enter into the suffering; nay more, into the very being of those who created them. Only through suffering are great works created, and only through the fellowship of suffering can they be understood. There is, I am aware, in this a theory of artistic creation and appreciation not perhaps usually held. I doubt the validity of any other.



If now I venture to lift what I have been trying to say on to the level of the Divine, and in relation to the historic Cross of Christ, it is done in the conviction that it is not credible that in the Godhead this basic law of life is inoperable. Following the paraphrase made by W. B. Yeats we see that Heraclitus glimpsed this truth long ago in Ephesus in an inspired prevision of the Cross.

*"Your words are clear at last, O Heraclitus:  
God and man die each other's life, live each other's death."<sup>1</sup>*

But can God suffer and die? Is not God impassible: "Himself unmoved, yet moving all"? Wells is not the first or the last to feel the need to maintain this distinction in the Godhead, even to the extent of creating a duality between the Veiled Being, alone and aloof, untouched and untouchable, and the God of the Heart, warm and loving, our comrade and saviour. Maybe the exigencies of thought and experience demand this distinction, but the soul in worship takes its flight into the presence of the Godhead, where such distinctions disappear; and once again the truth is established that paradoxes are solved in living experience. "The weakness in strength" that the soul longs for in the Godhead is found. God and Christ are not in opposition but are one.

*" . . . it shall be  
A Face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me,  
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever! . . .  
See the Christ stand."<sup>2</sup>*

It is this intuition which inspired the greatest passages in the Book of Isaiah: such a summary of history, for example, as that contained in the sublime phrase, "In all their affliction he was afflicted." God is identified with His people. They live because He gives His life for them: "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them." Just as in similar mood a modern writer has ventured to say, "We are saved by God's sorrows."

We cannot then confine the thought of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah to any mere mortal sufferer, whether individual or national. It must be carried to the highest realm of all, and it is only as it has relevance there that it can have relevance elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> *The Resurrection*, a play by W. B. Yeats (*vide* Fragment 62).

<sup>2</sup> *Saul*, a poem by Robert Browning.



"He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgression, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

It was a correct intuition which led the Christian Church to refer this to God in Christ, and to see that what is true of the highest in men and nations is true of God, but with this difference, that it is carried in God to the infinite, since His love and pity are infinite.

Browning's summary gives all that I feel is necessary.

God in Christ, accepted by the reason, solves everything in this world and out of it!

If what Browning said is true; or if according to Heraclitus' intuition we live in God's death; if we are saved by His sorrows, then we are confronted by a mystery in the Godhead which I believe only the Christian religion has fully faced and answered. It is expressed in the doctrine of the Divine *Kenosis*, or self-emptying—a doctrine which touches the extreme limit of paradox. How Paul came to the understanding of it, whether by direct intuition of the nature of God or by inference from life's experience, it would almost be idle to enquire. But we may note two passages in his first letter to the Corinthians, almost side by side, in which he shows the principle in its application both to earth and to heaven. The Christian life is rooted in the condition of self-emptying: "Dying, behold we live; . . . sorrowful yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing yet possessing all things." And then note how swiftly he passes to the heavenly sphere, with the knowledge that the same amazing paradoxes apply to God: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." God in His infinite majesty bows down to us, entering into the very heart of all the sin, misery and degradation of the world, taking upon Himself the entire burden, and bearing it out for us, as love ever does, "even to the edge of doom." So by this Divine Act of self-giving He purchases for us the inexhaustible treasures of His grace, giving them "form" in time and place, and making them available for us, so that we by His poverty may become rich.

How deeply this truth of the Cross in the aspect of Divine and human self-emptying laid hold on the imagination of the first Christians is well illustrated in the great acted parable of the

thirteenth Chapter of John's Gospel. Here is the true sovereign Man—ideal of the Greek world—self-ordered and self ordering, but with the difference which marks the transition from the Greek to the Christian dispensation: "Jesus knowing that his hour was come," and "that the Father had given all things into his hands," supper being ended, "took a towel, and girded himself" and washed the disciples' feet. Master and Lord, he became their servant: Sovereign, he stooped—as only the Highest can stoop—to the task of a menial, the living resolution of the paradox in the Divine Nature, proving himself in the act to be the very image of the immortal God. For it is only because God—Sovereign yet Servant of all—eternally empties Himself in redemptive love that the universe comes into being and is sustained. So Eric Gill, quoting Julian of Norwich, says: " 'It lasteth and forever shall, for God loveth it,' and as the actuality of everything is dependent on God's will so everything is sustained in being by his love." Such love is never passive, but by its very nature it must ever be obedient unto death.

Hence the historic Cross of Jesus becomes for the Christian as it were the window through which the meaning of the world is at last seen. If on the Cross a man dies, and no more—even Plato's perfect man—its meaning is confined to the human, the planetary; and whilst light is shed on that by its exhibition on the one side of man's capacity of loyalty even unto death, and on the other malignancy that almost passes belief, the line does not seem to me to run out further, and the maze of human existence still lacks a clue. But if "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself": if indeed He participates in the tragic conflict between darkness and light, life and death, and if the intuition of Heraclitus is correct that we live because God in truth dies for us, then at last we have a clue to the meaning of history, and we know what is happening in it. God is the Shepherd of Israel, and gives His life for the sheep. We see now that what was on the material level mere *bruta inertia*, on the level of man is the malignancy of sin; and that the upward thrust in the world of God's love must meet and conquer the evil in one way and one alone, and that is by Life out-poured in an ever-flowing stream cleansing and redeeming the world.

This involves, I know, belief in the personality of God, but the fact of existence, the patterned order of the world, the moral law, as well as the intimate experiences of the soul, in my judgment

leave room for no other. But a real stumbling block for many lies in the idea of any special act of God in intervening grace as in Christ. If God acts in such special ways what reliance can be put on the regularity of universal law? Does not caprice take its place?

It may be worthwhile to draw attention to an argument often made by the mystics on this point. It is an analogy from man to God. If in man's organism, his body, the soul is supreme, transcendent yet immanent, directing, ruling and affecting for good or ill his whole little cosmos, so God, as the soul of the universe, transcendent yet immanent, rules and affects it all. Once allow the truth of the analogy and the idea of the intervention of God in His creation, and the mode of it become more comprehensible. It is seen then not to be beyond law but to be within it, yet freely creative, as man is in his own orbit.

But there is another argument which has even greater weight I feel and it is based on the fact of guidance. If I can become conscious of a Hand stretched over me, of a will gentle yet majestic, correcting and directing me in ways and intentions beyond my own, and if the joy and usefulness of life prove to lie in dependence on this intervening will—yet not at the cost of my own freedom of choice and act—then it becomes altogether easier to understand God's intervention in Christ. The experience of guidance must, it seems to me, be taken as a true analogue to all God's acts; and it is as we come to understand the nature and mode of God's guidance in our own experience that we come to know the meaning of the great phrase "Shepherd of Israel"—*my* Shepherd, Shepherd of Nations: Shepherd of all the Universe, seeking and saving it all: maintaining and redeeming it, whole and in part, by the sacrifice of His own blood. The thought of Providence caused Epictetus to say that he had no option but to praise God: it is such confidence, raised to a much higher level, which fills the Christian's mouth with praise and brings Hallelujah to his lips in the midst of evil as well as good.

There are two things to which I would refer in conclusion. There is first of all that sheer emancipation, that breaking of the bands of sin, which has come to those who have become one with the crucified Christ, sharers in his sufferings and in his glory. Just as Jesus himself gave thanks that "all things" had been delivered to him by his Father, so Paul and John and all the generations of Christians since have been no whit behind in making the same limitless claim. The soul is completely enfranchised in Christ. The

phrase "All things," echoes through the pages of the New Testament: "*All things* are yours—the world, life, death, things present, things to come, *all things* are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

The second point I wish to make is that at a time of frustration and mounting evil like the present, there are many who find themselves unable any longer to think of this as God's world. But it was at such a time that Christ came, and it is precisely this sinful world which is the sphere of God's self revelation and redeeming work, now and always. God is Shepherd of Israel evermore, not of smooth and happy times only, but of all times, no matter how bitter or filled with cruelty and blood. And so far as we men are concerned this sinful world is the sphere of Christian action and the only one. We must not therefore at any cost try to contract out of it. Our place as Christians is in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, conscious that there is with us one like unto the Son of Man whose hands are scarred.

This brings me to the thought of what we in our modern jargon call the dynamic of the Cross—its logic, its irresistible constraint. Inspired by the Cross the Christian enters the world, object of God's creation and eternal love, and redeems it for His sake—his message being that of the Poor Man Jesus Christ who died to save all men. It was this message which Charles Kingsley gave in 1848 in his Christian call to the workmen of England, in rejoinder to the secular challenge of the *Communist Manifesto*. These men longed and looked for freedom. It would come, he said, but only through "Almighty God and Jesus Christ, the Poor Man, who died for poor men." The ill-starred Soviet poet Essenin challenged the "monolithic" state of Stalin in the same name. "When you speak of Christ beware," he wrote. "Beware of forgetting that he who gave his life for men was not on the side of the great ones of the earth, but on the side of the disinherited and the humble, and that when they called him 'Son of God' he found his greatest glory in being called 'Son of Man.'" And finally Georges Bernanos, an impassioned Catholic, completes our circle. "God saved each one of us and each one of us is worth the blood of our Lord. . . . Our Lord invested the poor man with such dignity that now we'll never get him off his pedestal." The gates of hell cannot prevail against this gospel once it takes hold of the hearts and wills of men, for all the power of God is in it, conquering and to conquer.

I think of the mysterious benediction which rests upon all followers of the Cross. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." For our final paradox lies in the fact that it is precisely those who have entered into this peace through the Cross who are filled with revolutionary fire and fervour, in whom the Kingdom of God come into being, and by whom alone, under God, this earth is converted into a "habitation for blessed spirits instead of demons."

JOHN A. HUGHES.

THE life of Christ is a Cross and the way of a Cross. It is wholly illuminated by the light of the Cross. The High Priest offers Himself as a sacrifice to God, showing obedience "unto death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 8). The Orthodox Church does not witness to the mystery of the Cross in uniform dogmatic formulas. She repeats the divinely-inspired words of the New Testament, the words of the apostolic preaching, speaks in images and symbols. "Christ died for all" (2 Cor. v. 15). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13), in Him "we have redemption through His blood" (Eph. i. 7), "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10), etc. In Christ we are reconciled with God, He is our Mediator; through faith in Him we recognise ourselves justified before God. Such is the fact testified to by the Word of God, and evident for the Christian consciousness. This fact is the starting-point for the theology of the Redemption and Atonement, which questions first of all about this redemptive sacrifice: asking to whom it is offered, how, why, in wherein lies its power? Answers to all these questions are given by various theological theories of the Redemption, which usually concentrate on one or other of its features—and in this way a thought in itself true often becomes one-sided. For Orthodoxy the theology of the Redemption and the Atonement is bound up with fundamental Christological premises.

The Logos is the "demiurgical" hypostasis turned towards the world in creation, and the Logos is also the Son of God coming into the world for its salvation. God creating the world out of the void, with man as its head, not only creates it by His almightiness and wisdom, but takes on Himself the care of its destinies and paths of freedom, by virtue of which it can become subject to sin and fall away from God. In other words, the eternal divine counsel about the *creation* of the world necessarily includes its salvation—that is, the reunion with God or "deification" to which it is pre-destined. Humanity is called to become *God-humanity*, which



is in fact the true origin of the creation. If the creation of the world is an act of God's sacrificial love, in the power of which the Absolute posits the relative beside itself, the Incarnation is likewise an act of sacrificial love in the humiliation of God descending to a hypostatic union with man. This sacrificial love of God to the world constitutes the *eternal* foundation of the Incarnation, which is therefore the second and final act of the creation. In this sense the Logos is the Lamb of God, "slain *before the foundation of the world.*" God, creating the world, takes on *Himself* the responsibility for its salvation, and fulfils by *Himself* what is lacking in creation—deifies created being, gives eternity to the becoming in time. Thus the idea of redemption is inseparably bound up with the idea of creation, and in a certain sense is *ontologically identical* with it. Here there is not and cannot be room for any "occasionalism," which makes the Incarnation exclusively dependent on the Fall of man. The question which was raised in Western theology, as to whether the Incarnation would have taken place if Adam had not fallen, is vain, for this very category of possibility or indefiniteness is not applicable to the ways of God, for whom there cannot be an "either or." The Incarnation is immanent in the very creation of the world, and thus Redemption, which is included in the Incarnation, is also virtually immanent in it. Such is the *price* of the creation for God Himself. Such is the *sacrifice* of God's love in the creation of the world: "so God loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The Cross of Christ is written into the creation at its very source, and primordially the world is called to receive God dying on the Cross for its salvation.

Yet the Incarnation also includes salvation from sin and sins, it is a reconciliation and atonement. It has the immediate aim of annulling sin, of restoring fallen man. This task becomes the primary one, because without its realisation union with God, the ultimate condition of which is the deification of man, cannot be restored. The Incarnation, which ontologically includes the consummation of created being in God-humanity, takes on the form of Atonement, and Christ becomes the redemptive sacrifice.

The Son in His obedience fulfils the will of the Father, who sent Him into the world (John xvii. 21-3); this will of the Father predestines Him to the sacrifice on the Cross. The Father gives the cup to the Son, dooming Him to death on the Cross. The Father

commands Him to overcome human nature, which is trembling in the face of the sin of the world. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). And for the first and only time this prayer of the Son in the name of His struggling human nature was as it were unanswered: Christ accepts the Cross not in the strength of His divine power, but in His human freedom. He had, by showing obedience to the end, to destroy the disobedience of Adam.

We witness to a Kenosis of God, to the struggle of man in the God-man and the acceptance of the cup of death. The Father Himself gives it to His Beloved Son. He Himself does not become man, but sends His Son into the world. Yet this is the sacrificial Kenosis of the Father as well, although of course it is quite distinct from the Kenosis of the Son. In this act of sending Him into the world the Father who begets the Son "deprives" Himself of Him. The Begetter and the Begotten are eternally one in the common being of the Father and the Son. Yet in His Kenosis the Son "leaves" the Father ("He came down from heaven"), and the Father forsakes the Son—the love of the Father which crucifies, and the love of the Son which is crucified—and in this sense it is their *common* crucifixion. But the human crucifixion of the Son and the divine participation of the Father in it is crucified love itself, the hypostatic Love of the Father and the Son—the Holy Spirit, the Joy of Love, who unites the Son to the Father: "Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). This joy is extinguished in the night of Gethsemane and in the gathering darkness of the ninth hour. The Holy Spirit who always rests on the Son forsakes Him. The hypostatic Love of the Father and the Son is also crucified for the sin of the world, and in the exinanition of the Cross it too becomes as it were inactive in the night of the world. "*And it was night*" (John xiii. 28) in which the Son of God is crucified and dies so that He may reveal the triumphant power of the Cross in the Resurrection. Thus in the Cross we see the full revelation of the God of Love, who is in the Holy Trinity: of the Lamb of God who is slain for the sins of the world, of the Father who receives this sacrifice, and of the Holy Spirit who fulfils it. The Son, incarnate and made man, is here the High Priest entering with His sacrificial blood into the Holy of Holies of the Triune God. The sacrifice of the Son implies the sacrificing love of the whole Trinity:

"so God loved the world"; and love has no power without sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

The Son takes the Cross. He, the Light of the world, is plunged into the darkness of sin, into the night of Gethsemane and mortal sorrow. What is hidden in the darkness of this night? Love, and only love—the crucified love of the Triune God to fallen creation. In the night of Gethsemane Christ suffered and lived out the sins of the whole of humanity and of every man, committed in the present, past, and future—such is the comforting and terrible axiom of our faith. Obviously the acceptance of all human sins was realized not in their empirical multiplicity, but was equivalent to it in its fullness and intensity. This does not in the least diminish the power of actual experience—it possessed the unique, divine-human intensity of time, thanks to which all the ages in their sins could be lived through and out in a single moment of time. In virtue of this equivalent there is no personal or historical sin which is excluded from it or not experienced by Christ as His own. In this capacity of concentrated, intensive experience is revealed the depth of the primæval human nature of the God-man unstricken by sin. We cannot try further to comprehend this sorrow "even unto death" in Gethsemane, this bitterness of the poisoned cup of sin which was drained by the Son of Man and the Son of God. But everyone approaching Him with faith and love finds and recognizes in this sorrow his own sin lived out in the divine-human sufferings of Christ.

A doubt has been expressed as to the very possibility of the Redemption (Socinus): how can the sin of one man be forgiven on the ground of the sufferings borne by another? Where are truth and justice in such a substitution? The very way in which the question is put errs in individualism and juridism, for it is aware of only separate individual persons to whom the principle of formal

<sup>1</sup> This does not imply "patripassionism," which is condemned by the Church in its anti-trinitarian aspect. This heresy refers to a crucifixion of the Father in His *fusion* with the Son, as it were, the "Father-Son." Such a patripassionism displays the identification of the hypostases (modalism) and is for this very reason a denial of the Holy Trinity. The Church confesses that only the Son, the God-man Jesus suffered in the flesh, was crucified on the Cross and tasted death in virtue of His divine-human nature, and in *this* sense neither the hypostasis of the Father nor the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit suffers with Him. But their "*indifference*" in the work of redemption would directly contradict the dogma of the Incarnation, and the denial of this indifference is in no way patripassionism. God in His eternity, as the "immanent Trinity," is above the world, yet the same Trinity as the Creator is "economically" related to the world. In the Redemption we have a complex form of this relationship.

The idea of a participation of the Holy Trinity in the redemptive sufferings of Our Lord has its iconographical confirmation in the representations of the Crucifixion with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove bending over it.

justice is applied. Such a differentiation between "mine" and "thine" is overcome by love, which knows not merely the difference but also the *identity* of "I" and "thou." What seems absurd from the point of view of abstract justice is in fact in the true nature of love. And above all, Christ is not at all "*another*" for anyone, for in His divine-human being *naturally* and in His love *compassionately* He includes every human individual, is All-man. In order to redeem all human nature and transfigure the whole of mankind the Lord puts on this human nature not only as every man has it, with all its limitations and individualizations, but as the primæval Adam possessed it, straight from the creative hands of God, that is, *wholly* and integrally. The sin which Christ takes upon Himself in the power of love is no more sin, which is alien to Him, but His own, although He has not committed, but only accepted it. Such is the power of *identification* revealed in the Redemption. The God-man is self-centred in His hypostatic being, but He is united to us in His humanity. That is why in His redeeming love He can plead for the sin of the whole world *without* impeding divine justice, for He has made this sin His own. This is not a *juridical* but an *existential* and *ontological* relationship. Thus in Christ's holy humanity, in the whole divine-human personality of the New Adam everyone can find and realize his justification and reconciliation with God.

Christ, the High Priest, releases the sins of man by the power of His sacrifice on the Cross. But the subjective realisation of Redemption must be found for each through its subjective acceptance on the ground of personal free self-determination. Yet subjective non-acceptance of the Cross does not destroy its objective power. Through the Cross and the Atonement for sin everyone acquires a new and eternal inviolable image in God, even if this image remains unmanifested in actual human existence. The link between the objective principle of human life and its subjective realization is fulfilled through freedom. Grace is a gift, *gratia gratis data*; but it does not compel (as *insuperabilis et indeclinabilis*), does not turn man into an *object*, and the personal way of appropriating salvation may be a complex, broken and contradictory one.

Thus Redemption is above all the Cross, love sacrificing itself for the salvation of the world. Here justice veils the face of love: sin must be suffered out to the end for the reconciliation of its bearer with God, even if this bearer is the Sinless One, the Son of God. Divine justice is impartial, it does not

stop short of anything, even of its judgment falls on God Himself, who in the person of the God-man has taken on Himself human sin: it is God's Atonement for sin. God the Three-in-One speaks again in His divine counsel about man, who is now fallen: I will re-create him, take upon Myself the "satisfaction" of divine justice. This justice lies in that He who gave man existence takes on Himself the results of His creative act—the possibility of sin, become actuality. God takes on Himself the responsibility for His own creation, as One "guilty" of human sin: God forgives man, returns to him his glory, redeems man through His own sufferings. Such is the sacrifice of love for the sake of love—the love of God to the world. This is the mortal cup of Gethsemane. It is accepted in the night of Gethsemane, but it is drained on Golgotha. The Son remains *alone*, the very indivisibility of the Holy Trinity is as it were disrupted, and this awful Sacrifice of God on the Cross is the consummation of the world's salvation: "it is finished." This is the death of God, for it is the death of the Son of Man, who is the Son of God. "Behold, the One who liveth in the heights becomes a corpse and is mysteriously received into a narrow tomb" (from a Service for Holy Saturday in the Orthodox Church).<sup>1</sup>

Redemption could not be limited by the acceptance of sin. In order that the whole man in his spiritual and physical being might be embraced, it must needs include both spiritual and physical death. "He was obedient even unto death—the death of the Cross." Death as a rupture in life was in a certain sense immanently inevitable, since it is grounded in the very nature of *spiritual death* in Gethsemane, although, as we shall see, Christ's death was not inevitable in the sense in which everyone of us "inevitably dies." But, above all, the acceptance of physical death is essential for the *fullness* of the redemptive sacrifice. Man, who has come under the sway of spiritual death or sin is also subject to physical death. This is expressed in the judgment of God on the fallen Adam: the Fall of man meant the utter disintegration of the life of the world ("the curse of the earth") and the inevitable death of man. Death is, of course, a law of nature, a law of organic life. But for man death is both unnatural and evil. In the genetic life of nature death is only a natural moment in the reproduction of the species, is rather an expression of the birth-giving force of life than weakness. It is only with the Fall of man that mortality acquires in nature too a tragic and ominous significance. Nature is poisoned by the stench

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. Cyril Hieros., *Cateches*, XIII, M.G. XXXIII, col. 780.



of decaying humanity. In nature death is only the end of individual existence, while in human life it strikes at personality itself: at personality, not merely at an individual, particular existence. Not only the body of man, the whole man dies, for neither soul nor body alone makes a human being. A body without a soul is a corpse, and a soul without a body is a phantom. Man is not a bodiless spirit, simply shut into the "prison of the body." However mysterious the link between soul and body, one thing is obvious—their separation means *death*, the end of the integral psycho- (or pneumato-) physical human existence.<sup>1</sup> He who has past in sin spiritually comes under its sway bodily as well—that is, becomes mortal. Together with sin, the God-man had also to accept physical sufferings and to taste death: yet in a different way from every other human being, who knows only his own sufferings and tastes only his own death. The New Adam, the Redeemer of the *whole* of mankind, lives through the agony of all human sufferings and tastes the death of all deaths, accepts death in order to overcome it: "He conquered death by death" (From the Easter Collect of the Orthodox Church)—the total, universal death. It is obvious that this too must be conceived not in the quantitative sense, but in the sense of a qualitative, intensive, integral equivalent, so that in the physical torments experienced by Christ and in His physical death all physical sufferings and the death of every human creature can be found.

These sufferings and this death of Christ, since they were freely accepted, could only be enforced by violence. They were not diseases with a natural death as their result, but torment, torture, and death ("They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to scourge and crucify Him", Matt. xx. 19): the immolation of the sacrificial lamb. The immaculate body suffered and was torn, the One by nature immortal tasted death; blood and water, the signs and symbols of life, flowed from the Holy Source of Life. And in the agony and death of the Cross the spiritual and physical burdens of the sin of the world were united.

This death is the ultimate realization of God's Redemption, its end, and the beginning of a new life. The cup of Gethsemane is a mortal cup, baptism unto death and unto a new life: "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death" (Rom. vi. 3). Thus in the Word of God the death of Christ

<sup>1</sup> In the fear and horror of death, albeit often cowardly and sinister, there is a deep metaphysical truth, the pathos of human integrality. And the Saviour knew this horror.



and in particular His blood is generally spoken of as a certain substance of the redeeming sacrifice, the "ransom" or "price" of our salvation. And Christ Himself at the last Supper speaks of the breaking of His Body and the shedding of the Blood of the New Covenant "for the remission of sins." This is the sacrifice of Golgotha, in which the whole fullness of divine exinanition is concentrated, the redemptive Kenosis of the Son of God. This does away with the completely unchristian conception according to which Christ accepts death "for an ideal" and dies "as a hero" on the Cross. No human death is comparable to the death and passion of Christ, for it is a free and voluntary death, accepted together with spiritual death for the sins of the whole world. It is not merely an outer event or evil chance, which might have happened or not happened, or simply a misfortune of an individual human being—no, it is the very essence, the content, and the power of the sacrificial life of Christ, His sacrifice of love. "Love is strong as death" (Song of Sol. viii. 6). Only he who does not know God in the Righteous One of Golgotha could wantonly compare the event which shook the earth and darkened the sun to the death of a "hero" for his idea. . . . The image of God crucified and dying for man on the Cross, His sufferings and death, is the answer of the God of Love to all the sufferings of the world created by Him—to all the questioning groans of Job, as to every questioning and all torment. God created the world not only in the Almightyness of His power; there was contained in it also the death of His Son on the Cross, and this was the price He Himself paid for the freedom of His creatures, the price for the destruction and tragedy brought by this freedom into the universe; and it was in freedom that the Son restored man through His obedience unto death. The death of God is the price of the freedom of man, the price of God's image in the creation.

The Cross is more than the sign of charity. It is not only compassion and mercy to those who are overcome and downhearted. The death on the Cross is also a *sacrament*—it has not only a moral, but a sacramental significance. It is the Easter of the New Covenant. The sacramental significance of Christ's death on the Cross is revealed at the Last Supper. This is not only an image or prophetic metaphor—just as the Eucharist is not only a metaphorical remembrance; Christ, as the Great High Priest of the New Covenant offers a real sacrament. It is the sacrament of His death on the Cross anticipated in its full reality, the Body that is broken

and the Blood that is shed. And it is also the sacrament of ultimate transfiguration—the mysterious and sacramental transfiguration of the suffering body into spiritual and glorified food: the Body which is broken, and dies, and rises again in death itself. Christ gives Himself not only for the sins of the world, but that it may be deified. The power of the sacrifice is in its sanctifying and liberating action, and the power of the sacrifice of the Cross lies in that it is the path of glory. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him” (John xiii. 31). “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke xxiv. 26). This glory is the glory of man as well, the glorification of all human nature, the sanctification of humanity in its new and mysterious All-man, in the “New Adam.” Moreover, death on the Cross is a purification of the whole universe, the new baptism of all creation, the sanctification of the cosmos, through the sanctification of the microcosmos.<sup>1</sup> And thus the whole of creation mysteriously participates in the Passion and the Cross of the God-man.

Christ died on the Cross, tasted real death, and His dead body was buried in the tomb like any other body. Yet, again, this death is not in every way like our death, precisely because it is the death of Christ the God-man. This exceptional character is expressed above all in that the death of Christ was death within the undivided hypostasis of the Incarnate Word, and with all its reality and fullness did not, however, and could not effect a complete disruption of the Divine Spirit and body of Christ. The spirit always leaves a mark of its union with the body—at least with a certain element of this body, with its primal atom, even if this body is already dissolved and absorbed in the organic life of nature.<sup>2</sup> But this bond can have a varying power, which is fully revealed in the Resurrection; death itself has therefore as it were a varying intensity and

<sup>1</sup> παντός τοῦ κόσμου καὶ διαivώζον καθάρσιον, says St. Gregory of Nazianz, *Oratio*, XLV, n. 13. Cf. the interesting explanation of St. John Chrysostom, *In Crucem et in Latronem*, why our Lord suffered on an “open place”: “in order to purify the element of air . . . and the whole of heaven and earth, for blood ran down from his side on the earth and sanctified it; our Lord did not suffer in the Temple, but in an open place, for it was a universal sacrifice offered for the whole world.”

<sup>2</sup> This thought is expressed by St. Gregory of Nyssa, who says that even in death the soul remains in contact with the elements of the decaying and decomposing human body—not, however, as he says, “as a life-force, but as a certain perceptive capacity,” τῇ γνωστικῇ δυνάμει. There remain on certain “particles” of the body which are already drawn into the whirlwind of the elements, the “traces and signs of a link,” τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ ἡμετέρου συγκρίματος. . . . And in the same way a certain image of the body, εἶδος, is impressed on the soul “as on wax.” *De anima et resurr.*, M.G. XLVI, cols. 76-7.

fullness in regard to the separation of body and spirit. A person with an intense spiritual life even in death preserves his link with his individual body; it remains a special "place" of his presence, in spite of his being beyond the limits of space and time, i.e. in a state of disincarnation. This is the spirit's actual "*remembrance*" of the body, and vice versa. If this link becomes tangible and manifest in one way or another we speak of "holy *relics*." Yet physical incorruptibility is not proper even to relics, at least as a general rule. The body of the Saviour, however, being entirely sanctified and deified by the Divine Spirit, preserved a direct link with the Spirit, even after their separation in death. In this sense it is an absolute relic; and the origin of all relics is Our Lord in the tomb. Unlike all other relatively "incorruptible" holy relics, the dead body of the Saviour "did not see corruption," remained truly incorruptible, and death had not the power to destroy His all-pure Divine body. But incorruptibility does *not* destroy the reality of death. Christ's death was not a natural necessity for Him, as it is for mortal life. His own life was not mortal at all, like that of Adam before the Fall, although even Adam's life was not *actually* immortal, even as Christ's human nature before His Resurrection. Death in fallen humanity is expressed in corruption and return to the earth (the reverse path of the creation of man). Yet the body of Christ could not go to the end of this path, in spite of the reality of His separation from the Spirit in death, precisely because His humanity was not naturally mortal—because His death was *voluntary*, in a certain sense *unnatural*,—a murder through the Crucifixion. It was limited in its effects, and the body of Christ even in the tomb remained incorruptible and in union with the Spirit. "It was not possible that He should be holden of death" (Acts ii. 24). Here already is revealed the reverse cycle, the beginning of victory over death. *Christ's death reveals His Resurrection*. The very death of the God-man appears as the Resurrection of human nature. The Cross becomes life-giving, becomes the new Tree of Life, and the day of the outrage on the Cross, the day of anguish and mortal sorrow is the day of joy and glory. "*Ipsa morte liberavit nos a morte: morte, occisus mortem occidit, . . . mortem suscepit et mortem suspendit in Cruce, . . . in morte Christi mors mortua est, quia vita mortua occidit mortem, plenitudo vitae deglutivit mortem*" (St. Aug., in *Ion.*, M.L. XXXV, col. 1489).<sup>1</sup> The Cross is the seal of salvation,

<sup>1</sup> "The death of Christ is the root of life," ὁ θάνατος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ῥίζα τῆς ζωῆς, St. Cyrill. Alex., in *Hebr.*, M.G. LXXIV, col. 965.

the sign of power and victory. Yet not only the sign, but the power of victory itself, and the very death on the Cross is the revocation of mortality and corruptibility. Christ, who was in all things one with mankind, was united to it in death in order to conquer death—this is the deepest point of His Incarnation: "He conquered death by death" (Easter Collect of the Orthodox Church). The death of Christ was a duel between life and death; life conquered death, having tasted it, accepted its sting, experienced the impotence of created life.<sup>1</sup>

The death on the Cross is victory over death both because it is crowned by the Resurrection, and because the Resurrection itself reveals and manifests this victory. The power of the Cross is precisely the power of the Resurrection; as the power of the Resurrection is the power of the Cross, the "invincible, indestructible, and Divine power of the venerable and life-giving Cross" (from the Eastern Orthodox Compline). Our Lord dies truly and really. But in His death there is revealed the highest measure of the primal risen life, inherent in every death—and it is revealed not only as a pure and abstract possibility, but as actual power. The image of the "corn of wheat" which Christ Himself gives refers fully to His own death (John xii. 34), in which the glory of God is revealed. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv. 43-4).

Thus the victory over death is realized from within death itself. The life of this world is lived out to the end in the exhaustion of Christ's death; death experienced and lived through to the end is already powerless to hold Him, for it is itself exhausted in Him: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. xv. 55). Resurrection is not the creation of a new life, but victory over death in death itself, eternal life which has shone from out of death, *the light of the Cross*. The Resurrection of Christ is therefore the eternisation of His redemptive death, which consummates His Passion and the whole path of His Divine-human

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that in Byzantine iconography the Resurrection of Christ is represented in the form of His descent to hell, from which our Lord delivers Adam and other with him (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 19). What is meant here is precisely the dissolution of the bonds of death. This iconographical composition developed under the influence of liturgical texts, and is as it were their projection in lines and colours. The general underlying thought shows that the mystery of the Redemption is centred not in the sufferings of the crucified Jesus, but in the *victory* of Christ in the very depth of His Divine abasement.

life. The bliss of new and risen life conceals the memory of suffering illuminated and surmounted, as light is the victory over "darkness, upon the face of the deep," as the creative word of God veils in beauty the "void and formless earth."

E. LAMPERT.

H. D. A. MAJOR

**T**O-DAY there are many people who have no use whatsoever for the Christian religion. They are an increasing multitude, and many nominal Christians have joined their ranks. Not a few of them have made up their minds, deliberately basing their judgment on the black facts of Christian history—its religious wars, its persecutions, its priest-craft, its obscurantism—that it is the enemy of human progress and enlightened culture. Others, a far greater multitude, are entirely indifferent to the claims of the Christian religion—not because they have ever studied these claims but because they are entirely ignorant of them.

Boswell once remarked to Dr. Johnson: "Pray, Sir, is not Foote an infidel?" Johnson replied: "I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel: that is to say he has never thought about the subject."<sup>1</sup> So it is with these people. We do not blame them: it is those who are responsible for their education who are to blame.

Now, Jesus Christ died on the Cross because He believed in the Christian religion and its supreme value for mankind. That is the primary fact. Had He not believed in the Christian religion and its supreme value He would not have "endured the Cross, despising the shame." Nor would he have bidden His disciples to take up the Cross and follow Him. Some will say: this is a very surprising statement, that Jesus died on the Cross because of the supreme value He placed on the Christian religion. Surely he died on the Cross as a propitiatory sacrifice offered to God for the sins of the world in order to avert the divine wrath from mankind. This interpretation of Christ's death on the Cross as a propitiatory sacrifice, although it is very early and occurs in the New Testament, does not (many New Testament scholars hold) go back to Jesus Himself. It was the primitive Jewish Christian explanation and justification of the shameful death of the Messiah, expressed in terms of the Jewish sacrificial system and supported by the description of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, portrayed in *Isa. liii*.

The death of Jesus can rightly be called a vicarious sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Vol. II, p. 78, 1820 edition in four volumes.



because in submitting to it voluntarily, for the sake of others, He offered Himself in obedience to the Will of God. This was the Godward aspect of His death as expressed by His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before His Crucifixion: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the sacrifice which Jesus made on the Cross in obedience to the Divine Will was not propitiatory—an offering intended to avert God's wrath from mankind. In the thought of Jesus, God was not an angry Deity demanding propitiatory sacrifices, but the loving Father of men. It would seem that Jesus, like the great prophets of Israel, did not regard the sacrificial system of Judaism as instituted by the Divine Will; He expressed His own conviction on this point in the words of the prophet Hosea: "I desire loving kindness and not sacrifice" (*Hos.* vi. 6, cited in *Matt.* ix. 13, xii. 7). Hence it may be rightly claimed that the death of Jesus on the Cross comes in the class of those heroic deaths of patriots who die to deliver their fellow-men from tyranny and enslavement or of prophets and martyrs who die because of their loyalty to truth and right.

The death of Jesus on the Cross was a testimony to the supreme value which He placed on His religion as essential for human welfare of the highest kind—what in the terms of New Testament teaching is called "eternal salvation," because this salvation is concerned, not primarily with man's body and his physical life, but with his moral and spiritual life—and not simply during his life in this world but also during his life after death. If Jesus had never died for His religion it is very doubtful whether His religion could ever have established itself among mankind. It was the thin red line of the Messiah's blood which separated the Christian Church from contemporary Judaism and so gave it an existence of its own as something unique in the religious life of that ancient world—a religion making transcendent and universal claims and demanding from its adherents a loyalty *usque ad mortem* (*Rev.* xv. 11). In the mind of His Jewish contemporaries the authority of the religious teaching of Jesus depended first and foremost upon whom He was: "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority"? Was Jesus the Coming One, the Anointed One, the Messianic Son of God, the Christ—all these titles meant the same thing to them—or was He merely a teacher, a Rabbi, a prophet? If He was the Christ, then His teaching, His Gospel or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Mark* xiv. 36; *Matt.* xxvi. 39, *Luke* xxii. 42.

"Good news of the Kingdom of the heavens" as He called it, was authoritative and final and must be accepted as God's last word to man.

If He was not the Christ it was then quite possible that His Gospel might be ignored or forgotten without peril or loss. Hence, at the trial of Jesus when the High Priest said to him: "I adjure thee by the living God tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of the blessed One?" everything depended upon the answer demanded from Jesus. If He confessed to not being the Christ He could be beaten and discharged as a discredited enthusiast. But if He claimed to be the Christ He must either be accepted and obeyed as such by the Sanhedrin or be put to death as a blasphemous impostor.

He gave a clear and decisive answer: "I am" (*Mark* xiv. 62), and as a consequence was condemned to death as a blasphemous impostor. He died on the Cross as a discredited deceiver in the eyes of the Jewish hierarchy and as a political revolutionary in the eyes of the Roman authorities; but subsequent events have furnished some justification for His claim. The inscription over His head on the Cross stated His crime. It is historic, but it was also prophetic. It was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin: the language of religion, the language of culture and the language of empire. It asserts a claim to universal supremacy. In one sense Jesus was a Liberal—the greatest Liberal that this world has known, but in another sense He was no Liberal at all. He was a Liberal in the sense that He claimed the fullest rights for human personality in a fellowship, not in a fellowship in which none were privileged, but, in which all were privileged. A fellowship in which all were potentially sons of the Highest and in which the freedom of sonship replaced the servile spirit of slaves. "With freedom did Christ set us free," wrote St. Paul. In that sense Jesus was a Liberal. But He was not a Liberal in the sense that He allowed any mitigation of His absolutist claims. Here He was a Dictator. He demanded from His followers absolute faith in His Gospel, absolute loyalty to Himself. This loyalty to Himself He regarded as being in accordance with the Divine Will of the Heavenly Father progressively realizing itself in that divine Kingdom which was to come on earth as it has come in heaven. He was tolerant in the sense that He could recognize that some were near the Kingdom who were not inside it: and that the greatest of these was John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Order. But He was

convinced that with Himself and His Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens, a new era had arrived, and that a new spiritual and moral order had been inaugurated, not in conflict with the old religious order which had been its preparation, but the consummation of all that was best in it, yet possessing a spirituality, a universality and a finality of its own, which so far transcended the old order as to constitute a new order.

His Messianic Office consisted essentially in His being the Supreme Organ of the Divine Revelation to man, and this revelation constitutes the spirit and the ideal of the New Order. Yet He showed His sanity by recognizing frankly how disappointing such a Messiahship must be to many. To His Forerunner He addressed the Beatitude: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me"; nor did He expect that many who had most highly appreciated the best of the Old Order would necessarily welcome the New. "No man," He said, "having drunk old wine straightway calleth for new, for he saith: the old is mellow."

Nevertheless, "he that was least in the Kingdom of the Heavens" was not only greater than the greatest outside it in privilege and in opportunity, but there was nothing else which he was capable of possessing which could be compared in value with the New Order—it was the Pearl of Great Price. Unless we realize the extraordinary value to Jesus of the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens with which He believed Himself to be solely entrusted, we shall not be able to realize His decision to die for it. Hence He faced the Cross rather than diminish in the slightest degree His Messianic claim, which was the very core of His Messianic Gospel. A Gospel which transcended all contemporary nationalist limitations and aspirations. Indeed, these contemporary and conflicting concepts of the Messianic Office, He regarded as temptations of the evil one. For Him, to be the Christ, was to be the Word of God.

But one point more must be added. Although He faced the Cross, He did not do it without intense difficulty. We cannot speculate on all the factors and elements which made that decision so agonizing. He could only accept it because He was clear on one issue. It was His Father's Will: "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" "Father, not my will but Thine be done." But interwoven with this conviction that it was His Father's Will, was another conviction: that the *via crucis* was the *via lucis*: that His death would constitute the beginning of His

triumph: "*From now onwards* (Matt. xxvi. 64 and Luke xxii. 69) ye shall see the Son of man seated on the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven."

It may be said that the Cross as thus presented makes the Crucifixion only one more martyrdom in the dark and agonising history of humanity. That is so. Jesus died on behalf of the truth, of the highest, most needful and so most precious truth, and He Himself was of the very essence of that truth on behalf of which He died. In that respect His martyrdom is the supreme martyrdom in the history of mankind. But like all martyrdom it was vicarious: suffering borne voluntarily to preserve values which for the sake of others must not be allowed to perish. Very strange is this principle in our human life—that suffering and death should have to be the price paid to preserve spiritual and moral values in human society, and apparently not simply to conserve those values; but even to augment them. The followers of Jesus came to see in His Crucifixion, not simply the conservation of the values of His Gospel, but, an augmentation of those values unveiled from stage to stage, and from age to age, by the presence and operation of Christ's spirit in the consciences and minds of those who were loyal to Him.

This briefly is what the Cross means to me. I do not assume for one moment that the Cross may not rightly mean a great deal more than this to others, just as it seems to me that there are many interpretations of the Cross which make it a great deal less because they fail to do justice to the divine nature, whether of the Father or of the Son or of the whole human brotherhood, as unveiled in the Gospel of Jesus.

But the Gospel of the Cross, besides the bright side which I have attempted to outline, has also a very dark side. Speculative theologians have discussed whether there could have been the Cross if there had been no sin in the world and, because of all that the Cross had come to mean to them, they have spoken of the sin which necessitated it as: *O felix culpa!*<sup>1</sup> Certainly without sin there could, and there would, have been no Cross; and that is the dark side of the Cross.

Popular preachers in Passion Week are wont to deliver sermons on the men who crucified Jesus Christ. This we find to be a very terrible theme when we investigate it—it abounds with surprises and warnings. But who are the men who crucified Jesus Christ and

<sup>1</sup> See Westcott's essay, *The Gospel of Creation*.

who have continued since His Crucifixion to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh—as the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* expresses it (vi. 6)? All need absolution here, and those most who thought, and perhaps think, they need it least. It was not the cowardly politician, Pontius Pilate, who passed sentence of death, nor the ignorant and misled Jewish mob who shouted, “Crucify,” nor the Roman soldiers who drove in the nails, who initiated and were really responsible for the crime of the Cross, but the most eminent authorities of the Jewish Church of which Jesus was a member. Had they not determined on His death He would never have been crucified, and the reason they desired His death was because He revealed a New Order in religion which they were unable, on account of their conservatism and timidity and self-interest and complacency, to accept. Viewed from the worldly plane what they did was entirely natural and excusable, but it was a crime and a mistake—the darkest crime, some will say, and the greatest mistake ever made by the leaders of the People of God. It was the religious crime of religious men, this darkest crime in human history.

This crime was due in some degree to the element of originality in the religion of Jesus. His religion was essentially of the prophetic type. It was primarily concerned with moral and spiritual values and had no place in it for sacerdotal institutions and ecclesiastical regulations save in so far as they were the servants of the moral and spiritual values which His Gospel enshrined. The religious attitude of Jesus is one which priests and ecclesiastics have an ingrained tendency to suspect and oppose. The long struggle between prophet and priest, and prophet and scribe, disclosed by the modern study of the Bible which culminates in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, did not terminate with that Crucifixion. It reappears in the subsequent history of the Christian Church. There we see the continuance of the religious struggle between the goodly company of the prophets and their sacerdotalist, institutionalist and traditionalist opponents—the weary fight between those who know that the religion of Jesus is the religion of the Spirit, and those who venerate it as the religion of the letter: it may be the letter of Scripture or the letter of the Canon Law or some other form of sacred tradition enshrined in institutions, rites and customs, and not in the free, fearless, loving and true Spirit of Jesus Himself. Hence the perpetual possibility of new crucifixions and new calvaries in every successive age of the Church, and the

inevitable temptation which besets the authorities of that Church to adopt an attitude and policy similar to that of those who crucified Jesus. It was the men of God, the People of God, not the pagans and worldlings, who were the real authors of the Crucifixion. For these religious people His religion was no religion at all. It was an irreverence, a blasphemy, a deception. To-day, the religious world, to be more explicit, the Christian world, is still faced in crisis after crisis with the test of making a right decision as to what is the true religion of Christ. That is the theme of Lowell's great poem:

*"By the light of burning martyrs,  
Christ, thy bleeding feet we track,  
Toiling up new Calvaries ever  
With the Cross that turns not back.*

*New occasions teach new duties:  
Time makes ancient good uncouth:  
They must upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast of truth."*

J. RUSSELL LOWELL.

Christ's Gospel was the Gospel of the New Order—the Order of the Kingdom of the Heavens. That New Order was not primarily a new political order. It was the fundamental mistake of the primitive disciples of Jesus that they thought it was. For them He was as one of the Zealots. Jesus repelled this political ideal of the New Order as a temptation of the evil one: "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men." Nor was the New Order of Jesus a new economic order. Jesus was not primarily concerned with the appalling poverty-stricken conditions of His economic environment. He cited the profound dictum of the Deuteronomist: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live."<sup>1</sup> Christ's method for the solution of the economic problem is expressed in His exhortation: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things needful for this life shall be added unto you."

The New Order of Jesus was primarily and fundamentally spiritual and moral—right personal relations with the Eternal.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the words of St. Paul: "for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (*Rom. xiv. 17*).



That was the method of Jesus. But how hard for His contemporaries and for many in subsequent ages to understand it, accept it, and practise it. Right relations with the Divine Father through the Divine Son, and then realized in right relations with our fellow-human beings—this was the method of Jesus for His New Order—not corporate action by the Christian Church in the world of politics and economics, but the personal influence of each individual son of God in the sphere in which he finds himself. There is no small danger of Jesus being crucified afresh if we substitute in His name and strive to realize as His that which is in fundamental opposition to His methods and ideal.

This is not the occasion, nor is there space, to deal with other aspects of the New Order of Jesus for which He was crucified. In many respects it reversed contemporary values and still does so. It was fundamental to the New Order of Jesus that kingship is service: "to serve is to reign." A kingdom in which all are kings because all are servants. The Cross is the Distinguished Service Order of humanity.

*"The Kingdoms of the Earth go by  
In purple and in gold:  
They rise, they triumph, and they die,  
And all their tale is told.*

*One Kingdom only is Divine,  
One banner triumphs still;  
Its King a servant, and its sign  
A gibbet on a hill."*

G. F. BRADBY.

That *lex orandi* is *lex credendi* is, I suppose, true in my own case as in that of others. Before the Holy Communion service (the Commemoration of Christ's death on the Cross)—it is my custom to pray:

"O Heavenly Father, grant that we who are about to celebrate the Sacrifice of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, may be strengthened in the spirit of that sacrifice to give ourselves more wholly to Thy service through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."

H. D. A. MAJOR.

# 9

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

THIS is no more than a purely personal statement, although parts of it may be couched, for convenience of statement, in general terms. I have no desire whatever to generalize my personal experience—or at any rate none beyond what I suppose to be the fundamental human desire to believe that one is not a mere eccentric oddity. That, no doubt, translates itself into a kind of faith that some passages at least which have been of crucial importance in one's own experience may have a certain validity for others. Without that faith, why record one's experience at all?

## §

The significance of the Cross is something which man gradually discovers. The process of discovery moves from plane to plane in an ascent which, once begun, is unending, for all that it seems to be painfully intermittent. The difficulty is to begin.

Or perhaps difficulty is not the right word. At least I cannot remember a time when I wanted to begin, but could not. I can remember well enough long years when the question: "What think ye of Christ?" had no relevance to myself whatever. I am not saying that it had in fact no relevance; simply that I was conscious of none. If anyone had put the question to me point-blank, I should have been embarrassed very much in the way I am still embarrassed by the banners and tracts of aggressive evangelists; and if a reply had been wrung from me, it would have been that I did not think about him at all.

Nor have I more than a dim recollection, nor do I remember having had an exacter knowledge, of how it came about that when I was well over thirty, it suddenly became imperative for me to make up my mind about Christ. The desolating experience of the last war, intensified by a personal sorrow which carried me into an altogether unfamiliar dimension of experience—these were no doubt part of the circumstance which changed the question:

"What think ye of Christ?" from one of indifference to a matter almost of life and death.

Not that I was in need of a faith. I had found one. Quite definitely I had discovered that I believed in God; and it certainly did not seem to me of primary importance whether the God in whom I believed was the Christian God or not. It had been given to me in the very act of my discovering him, or being discovered by him, that he was an incomprehensible, but loving and beneficent God, in whom I lived and moved and had my being. The first article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty," satisfied me completely. I not merely believed; I knew.

The link between this God and the God of Jesus was simple, direct, human and historical. Of all the prophets who had declared the nature of God the Father, Jesus was pre-eminent. He alone seemed to speak with a perfect intimacy of the God in whom I believed. Great and glorious things, which seemed to me no less self-evidently true, had been spoken of Him by others; but for sheer simplicity and palpable authority the words of Jesus concerning Him were in a class apart. It may have been the fact that I had been bred in the Christian tradition which determined this judgment, because the old familiar phrases had suddenly acquired an astonishing new depth of meaning; and sometimes I have asked myself whether, if I had been bred in a different religious tradition, and habituated to the words of another prophet, my judgment would have been the same. I do not know. Nor does it greatly matter. For the words of Jesus are only part of the revelation of God through Him. There is His life and death besides.

§

As I, from my peculiar angle, approached the death of Jesus, the problem it raised was agonizing. Was the Faith of Jesus in God the Father, which seemed to me so simple and so certain, so lucidly and self-evidently true, proved by the manner of His death to be an illusion after all? That some belief to which His faith had led Him had failed Him at the last was proved by His terrible cry of dereliction on the Cross. Was it simply that His physical suffering was far beyond anything that He had believed His Father could require Him to bear? Or was it that some expectation of

deliverance had been disappointed? What did the cry of dereliction *mean*?

No doubt, there is no conceivable answer to the question that can be satisfying to all men. But it seemed, and still seems, to me that every Christian is bound to seek until he finds his own answer. The crucial difference between those of my temperament and more orthodox Christians is that for us the Resurrection of Jesus is not a foregone conclusion. We do not know, beforehand, that this story has a happy ending. As far as the natural imagination can carry us, the Jesus who hangs upon the Cross is an abandoned and despairing Jesus who dies in the fearful knowledge that the Father has forsaken Him. One can only humbly conjecture what it was He had believed would happen, which did not happen. My own conjecture, for what it is worth, is given in my *Life of Jesus*; and I have never seen reason to think otherwise. But it is a mere conjecture, though it satisfies me.

There are two main ways of thinking upon the matter. There are those who believe that Jesus did verily believe in and prophesy His own Resurrection after three days: in which case the cry of dereliction was wrung from Him by an unbearable agony of physical suffering, so terrible that it brought a momentary eclipse of His co-consciousness with the Father. For this way of thinking, the Resurrection is now, as it was then, a foregone conclusion. Jesus knew that it would happen, as it did happen. As I say, this way of thinking is temperamentally alien to me. And I do not find that it fits the story. If Jesus did repeatedly prophesy His Resurrection on the third day, why was it that His disciples did not expect it, as they manifestly did not? For them, when Jesus died upon the Cross, the story was ended, as far as their human minds could know. The Master was beaten.

The second way of thinking upon the matter is a way of experiencing. It shares the despair of Jesus and the despair of the disciples. That is the end of the story—in that dimension. That the story was not ended, after all; that the Master was not beaten, after all—this knowledge comes with a break in the dimension. With that break we pass from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the natural to the spiritual. And precisely as there came to the disciples, in the extremity of their despair, the knowledge that Jesus still lived, and lived more truly and essentially as an abiding spiritual presence, so there comes to us as we endure the pain of re-living the disciples' experience—of believing in Jesus, and

following Him, and finding Him abandoned at the last—the certainty within our souls that He lives eternally. He abides in us and we in Him. His Resurrection is our resurrection.

## §

The significance of the Cross is primarily the significance of this experience. It is the revelation of the mystery of the majesty and love of God in the utter and condign defeat of His Son. No despair imaginable by the human mind could touch the despair of Jesus: for no knowledge of God was more self-evidently perfect than His. Truly, He and his Father were one. If we say He imagined the God to whom He prayed "*Abba*, Father!" and created Him after His own image, it makes no difference really: for once God had been imagined as Jesus imagined Him, no other imagination will suffice the religious need of man. We must have the God of Jesus, or we will have no God at all. A God who is other than the God of Jesus is less than God, for Jesus has set one more perfect before our imaginations.

Yet—this is the point—the God whom Jesus imagined and experienced and obeyed, even He did not fully know. Even from Him, during His mortal life, God's deeper purposes were concealed: concealed in order that they might be more fully revealed in and through His Son. The God of Jesus is, indeed, our God; but the height and depth, the incomprehensible riches of God, have yet another dimension. To the God whom Jesus knew is added the God whom Jesus did not know, but who was revealed through Jesus. Jesus, knowing and loving God, followed His will and was obedient unto death—but unto worse than death, unto the knowledge that His Father had forsaken Him. Through this sacrifice we, the unworthy, are privileged to know that this is the manner of the love of God; and at the moment that we enter into this knowledge the marvel of marvels happens—the miracle of miracles. Jesus rises from the grave within us, descends from the right hand of the Father to meet us, to assure us that it is verily so. It is He Himself who assures us that we are not, in believing this, betraying Him; that we are not presuming to possess a knowledge won through Him, but in which He cannot share. It is a knowledge which He Himself gives us here and now, as He gave it before by His obedience unto death and His suffering unto despair. In the very act of this knowledge, Christ is risen and

re-born in our souls. This knowledge is one with that resurrection and rebirth. Christ is with us to assure us that, so far from failing Him by believing a revelation of God which was concealed from Him, it is only by believing in this revelation that we enter into His life and His joy. If we cling to Jesus in the flesh, we lose the Christ of the spirit.

Yet we do not reject the Jesus of the flesh to receive the Christ of the spirit. We do not choose between them. On the contrary, it is by our loyalty to Jesus after the flesh that we are partakers in Christ of the spirit. We are drawn, inevitably, through love of the mortal Jesus into the knowledge of the eternal Christ. The process and the progress are fore-ordained: the natural leads to the spiritual as surely as the seed to the flower. But there is a break in the dimension. And that break in the dimension is a death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die . . ." Except we also die with the mortal Jesus, we do not rise with the eternal Christ. That dying into life is the essence of the Christian revelation, the Christian experience. Of it the Cross is the symbol. But the Cross is infinitely more than the symbol of it. The Cross is where and how it happened, once for all. It is with that Man, on that Cross, on that Calvary, that we are required to die: to know ourselves forsaken as He was forsaken, to know ourselves forsaken in the very fact that He knew Himself forsaken.

### §

Man died into life, once for all, on the Cross. A man, by that dying into life, became the Man: for the mystery of the all-comprehending, all-sustaining love of God was revealed in Him, and in its fullness, in Him alone. No man, therefore, comes to the Father save by Him; He was and is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

And yet it seems to me that for many who profess to believe these things, the Cross is not, as it surely should be, the core and quick of all vital experience. True, it is not given to us, or it is given to but few of us, to tread the heroic path; we cannot cry with Paul, "I die daily." But because we are not saints, we do not cease to be Christians: or we should not cease to be.

In fact, we seldom begin to be Christians. For the very centre of the life of the Christian is the Cross; and it is only in so far as it is the centre of his life that he is a Christian. Christians are not just



men who profess a certain religion: they are men who, by the virtue of the Cross, have died into life. And the new life they live is utterly different from the old. It may not be more saintly; it may not even be braver—though that is hard to believe—but it is assuredly different: absolutely different. The standards, the values, the processes of living are changed. The truth is no longer in a proposition; it is in a person. The difference is revolutionary.

This truth, which is in a person, governs all. We act differently. Above all, we think differently; for we know the price of truth is a death. It is not that that particular truth which was revealed in Christ cost a death, whereas all other truths may be more cheaply had. If that were so, what relation would there be between his truth and ours? Rational and factual truth, common to all men, is one thing; but the truth which is consonant with the life of the Christian is quite another. And the Christian knows that truth of this kind is costing.

It is the kind of truth whereby we act and think as Christian men: that is, as men who know themselves responsible to God. In order to know that kind of truth, we have to be prepared to sacrifice all our familiar assumptions, our cherished securities. Possibly, some of them may be given back to us, but they have no Christian warrant unless we have first surrendered them. We cannot bespeak God's approbation for the desires and virtues of the natural man, or God's help for the aims and activities of the natural society. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common"; but until God verily has cleansed it, it is common. And God cannot cleanse it, so long as we cling to it. We must first have let it go.

It is not easy to let go the security of little things; it is infinitely harder to let go the bigger securities—the esteem of one's neighbours, the comfort of popularity, the anchorage of conformity. Maybe we are fortunate—for probably there are fortunate Christians—and we are not required to let them go. But the good fortune of the Christian, like the victory of the Cross, can never be a foregone conclusion. He has to have been ready to let all his securities go; and not merely to have been ready to let them go—for that is a matter in which it is fatally easy to cheat ourselves—but really to have let them go. He has, in one eternal moment of surrender, to have yielded them up, radically and completely, to God: to have made himself utterly naked before God.

No one can intervene. What God requires of the Christian is

mediated by none save Christ alone. There is no keeper of the Christian's conscience, no Grand Inquisitor to take away the burden of this terrible Christian freedom. The laws of Church and State are no protection: for the Christian is required to offer them also up with the rest of his securities to the judgment of God. God may ratify them, or He may not; but if He does ratify them, it is not because they exist, but because He, in an ever-new act of redemption passed between the naked soul and Himself, has redeemed them anew. Man cannot say to God: "To this and this I am compelled." In the sight of God he is compelled to nothing, save only to loving obedience of Him.

How can he be, in the sight of God, compelled to anything else? "Compelled?" says God. "Compelled by what?" By fear—of suffering, of punishment, of death? "He that shall lose his life, the same shall save it."

§

But the Christian conscience is not anarchical: still less is it irresponsible. On the contrary, it is the absolute consummation of responsibility. Before God alone, can man become completely responsible. And responsibility of this order can be borne only by complete submission. Conscience is not puffed up; neither doth it behave itself unseemly. It is not, as some of its professors seem to believe, an aggressive, insubordinate and domineering faculty capriciously added to man's more patient endowments. That is false conscience. Conscience is the harmony of all man's faculties, when they have been purified of their inveterate egoism by the grace and in the presence of God. All that a man has discovered in selfless pursuit of the truth, all that his reason, his love, and his imagination, acting as instruments of God's illumination, report to him are the elements from which the judgment of conscience is created. It is the utterance of man's total personality, functioning with a new integrity, being released from the bonds of identification with what the mystics called "creatures." And that utterance is not to be attained by any effort of the human will. The moment inevitably comes when in the light of the unaided human consciousness the truthful reports of the faculties of man are discrepant and contradictory. The ideal and the real deny one another; mind and heart will not be reconciled.

This is the perpetual crucifixion of the human soul; of which the Cross is at once the archetype and the resolution. In this

travail of the conscience, the human will acknowledges its own impotence, its radical insufficiency; and surrenders itself to God. "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." And with that casting of our burden on the shoulders of Christ, adding our little cross to His great one which includes it, we enter into the freedom which is the appointed end of our responsibility. But for the certainty of that final deliverance, no human mind could bear the load of responsibility, which would oppress it to the point of madness. But the Cross—"to the Greeks foolishness"—is the divine madness which stills our human madness into peace: for in it we see the meaning of our tiny travail, and know that it also belongs to the quick of all creation. As the mighty purpose of His own suffering was concealed from the vision of the mortal Jesus in order that He might reveal it to us as the eternal Christ, so from our mortal eyes is concealed the purpose of our travail in order that it may be at once hidden and revealed in Christ—"and Him crucified."

It is by the grace of God, the power which descends to us from Christ to regard ourselves as simple vehicles of the working of the inscrutable will of God of whose ultimate and present beneficence we are assured, that the intolerable tension of the elements of our human personality is resolved. When we have acted and thought to the uttermost as men, we become as little children, lost in wonder and worship of the mystery of which we are partakers. The meaning and source of our own mystery shines before us. The more familiar with its radiance we become, the more are our spiritual eyes enabled to discern and follow the infinitude of channels by which it pervades the human universe. We understand the spiritual clairvoyance of a great prophet like William Blake, when he declared that "Every kindness done to another is a little death in the Divine Image."

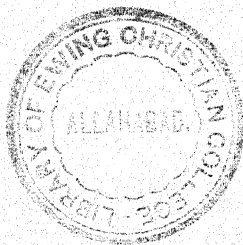
The significance of the Cross is that it is a final revelation of the nature of the divine creativity which sustains the universe. The mystery which, on the natural level, is so familiar to us, or now, maybe, by the mechanics of a false civilization, so far removed from us, that we forget that it is a mystery: the mystery of birth through death, in the burial of the seed in the earth and its resurrection, whereby our natural bodies live—this mystery is lifted to a higher level in the pain and the lapse from consciousness which precede the birth of a human child. But it is raised to a spiritual pinnacle in the death of the mortal Jesus and the

Resurrection of the eternal Christ. At that supreme height it becomes the final revelation of the nature of the will and love of God.

The humanly perfect man, the first discoverer of God the Father, the first-born son of God, by reason of His absolute filial obedience to the law of the new dispensation—the love of God, who first loved us, uttering itself by divine compulsion in the love of Man—was driven to the shame and agony of the Cross: a double death (for man is spirit and matter), a death of the body in an extremity of physical pain, a death of the spirit in an extremity of spiritual dereliction. A complete human death, a final and unique human death: whereby our human hopes are for ever blasted, or our superhuman faith is made for ever secure. One or the other we must choose. In order to be human we must choose. Avoid the choice, and we are less than men.

But we cannot choose. True, we cannot choose. The human will is impotent. But we can and we must face the issue as men, using all our faculties. Despair or deliverance? For us, for all humanity, for ever and ever. When we understand that that is the issue, we know that it is beyond our power to choose. God has chosen for us. And Christ is risen.

J. MIDDLETON MURRY.



## CONRAD NOEL

IT will be remembered that in the Athanasian Confession of our Faith, salvation, the soul's health, is made to depend on thought. "Whosoever will be saved must thus *think* of the Trinity." Our Lord Himself quotes with approval the ancient law about the love of God and the love of one's neighbour and bids the scribe, Love the Lord his God, not only with all his heart and strength, but with all his mind. The Church, when it has remembered its living tradition, has always confessed the importance of the Reason, so that I need make no apology for setting out the "rationale" of the doctrine we are considering. If a proposition is not reasonable, why should we accept it as true? We must, of course, be on our guard against making our limited minds the measure of all things in heaven and earth, but it is even more disastrous to swallow whole and undigested what is presented to us as wholesome Catholic food. I forget who it was who said that the theologians told him that he would be damned if he did not believe the Athanasian Creed and added, that he would be "damned if he did believe it," but I must confess to some sympathy with this witty sceptic. I would rather be damned in company such as his than saved with the complacent and credulous, and I have more than a faint suspicion that they will never be saved at all, but will be put to confusion.

People who refuse to think things out for themselves are the victims of every wind of vain doctrine and accept these vanities as true orthodoxy. They will accept without questioning revolting doctrines of the Ransom and the Precious Blood.

We must remember that the theories which have grown up around the admittedly scriptural reference to the "price" paid for our ransom are so immoral and unscriptural as to discourage the use of the phrase.

To whom is the price paid? Some have suggested that it is paid to God, and that the shedding of the Blood of His only begotten Son buys off the vengeance of the angry Deity, so that we may escape the consequences of our sin, and stream through the un-



locked gates of heaven. But God did not so hate the world, but "so loved" the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Nor is there any hint in the New Testament that it is the consequences of our sins that are obliterated by the sacrifice of the Cross; it is the sins themselves that are abolished by our transformation from vice to virtue and from death into life.

But some of the ancient Fathers hold that the price for sin is not paid to God, but to the Devil. Satan would only consent to release mankind from the slavery into which he had driven them, by the shedding of the Blood of the Divine Victim. This is also immoral and absurd—absurd, for the Devil is a liar from the beginning and could never be relied upon to keep the bargain.

Both these theories received their death-blow in the writings of Anselm, and the balanced and orthodox Catholic doctrine was developed and secured until the Reformation by Master Peter Abelard, perhaps the greatest thinker of the Middle Ages. His brilliant thought was tempered by true emotion, as may be seen in his dying swan song,

*"O what their joy and their glory must be."*

No one who sings that hymn and rejoices in its glowing devotion can accuse Abelard of barren scholasticism.

He gives us indeed a practical and reasonable doctrine of the Atonement. Master Peter has been greatly misunderstood by those who charge him with holding that "Christ only made Atonement by His exemplary life and death and that we receive the benefits of the Atonement through the subjective effect of these upon our hearts."

I have not in my library a copy of Peter Abelard's work on this subject, but was at great pains in writing the Prologue to my *Jesus the Heretic*, to procure an authentic copy of his book on the Blessed Trinity, which had been burnt as heretical by the Council of Soissons. In it I found that he steered the true course between the heresies called Sabellian and Tri-theist; with which we are not concerned here. But the nature of these errors is explained simply in my book and his orthodoxy vindicated. It is shown that what was in him condemned as heresy became accepted within a hundred years as the general doctrine of the Church. These studies put me on my guard against accepting the subjective view of the Atonement as the teaching of Abelard. Let us turn, not to some partisan defence, but to the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, for a balanced



summary of his doctrine. "In his view, the reason for the Incarnation and the death of Christ was the pure Love of God. By no other means could men be so effectually turned from sin and moved to love God." This was considered by St. Bernard as "denying the 'Sacrament of Redemption,' and regarding the teaching and example of Christ as the sole benefit of the Incarnation. But in his 'Apology' Abelard distinctly asserts that 'The Son of God was incarnate to deliver us from the bondage of sin and the yoke of the Devil, and to open to us by His death the gate of eternal life.'"

The true Abelardian doctrine of the Incarnation and Atonement became the received teaching, not only of the mediæval Church, but of the wisest of our Anglican reformers, against the Lutheran and Genevan theories which debased the nature of man, and dishonoured the character of God.

If we are to come to a true understanding of the doctrine, we must insist that the death of Jesus must never be divorced from His life and teaching, and that the Precious Blood becomes a fetish when it is separated from the idea of the whole life poured out in passionate service to mankind. "Now the blood is the life." It is the contemplation of this supremely satisfying life crowned by death and the uniting of ourselves with it that is essential to our salvation. If this can be called a subjective view of the Atonement, I am frankly a subjectivist.

At the back of my mind there always lurks the suspicion that the Christian world is divided into two camps; the one camp,<sup>1</sup> although it acknowledges with its lips the humanity of Jesus, for all practical purposes denies it. He is tempted only in appearance, He does not actually grow in wisdom and stature, He is not in all respects made like unto us; He is always God but not always Man. The camp followers of this theology have to admit that He was Man, but shrink from saying that He was "*a* Man," in spite of the term being used by St. Peter, as recorded in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, and in spite of its use in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> "The leading characteristic of the School of Antioch was the oriental tendency it displayed to separate the human from the divine. The tie which united them, however it may be viewed, did not spring out of the natural kinship of the human with the divine—a kinship always existing, but revealed in its splendour of perfection in Christ. In the Antiochian theology there was a disposition to regard the *nexus* between the Deity and humanity as the arbitrary exertion of the divine power, by which natures incongruous and incompatible in their essence had been brought together in an artificial alliance rather than a living union." A. V. G. Allen writing about *Arius*, who "had received his training, not in Alexandria, but in Antioch" (*The Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 85).

The other camp<sup>1</sup> believes that in the Incarnation God took human flesh, but also took upon Him the mind and will and affections of a man, the man Christ Jesus, and that in some real sense He had been in men from the beginning. He was in the World and the World knew Him not; He came unto His own and His own received Him not; and all this was happening long before the Incarnation. St. Paul approvingly quotes the Greek poets as saying, "In Him we live and move and have our being; . . . for we are also His offspring." Later, St. Athanasius expressed the same idea, saying:

"For the world itself may be thought of as one great body in which God indwells; and if He is in the whole, He is also in the parts. It is no more unworthy of God that He should incarnate Himself in one man, than it is that He should dwell in the world. *Since He abides in humanity*, which is a part of the universe, it is not unreasonable that He should take up His abode in a man who should thus become the organ by which God acts on the universal life" (Athanasius, *De Incar.*, c. 41).

Now, if God was in men from the beginning, in the sages and the prophets, recalling mankind or reconciling them to Himself, then the coming of the Son of God in the Incarnation of Jesus, the expression of God in His life and teaching and His atoning death, must be regarded not apart from the whole process but as its crowning. And every act of sacrifice on the part of heroic men and women from the beginning becomes a letter in the alphabet of redemption and all these letters are pieced together and given meaning in the incarnate and atoning Word of God; all form part of the Oblation of Himself once offered.

Supposing this to be the true doctrine of the Atonement, it would appear that if mankind had not fallen, it would have been from the very beginning the Word of God incarnate. Whatever be the meaning of the Fall, it is evident that at some time or other in the world process, things began to go wrong; they were no longer "according to plan." This breaking of God's plan may have begun long before the evolution<sup>2</sup> of man; it may have begun when lower

<sup>1</sup> "One of these (two) tendencies, which proceeded from the home of Greek theology, where the influence of Athanasius still lingered, regarded the human nature as in its constitution so closely akin to the divine, that when Christ assumed humanity He did not take something in its nature foreign to the divine principle: He rather by His incarnation revealed the kinship of the human with the divine, and the perfected human was therefore declared to be identical with that which was most divine" (*ibid.*, p. 188).

<sup>2</sup> The use of this phrase does not imply any belief in the theory of "Natural Selection."

forms of life began to develop feeling and consciousness and an embryo will, but whenever and however this may have happened, not only the Jewish Scriptures, but the sacred literature of all races and the human conscience itself bear witness to the fact of sin and opposition to the Will of God and consequent destruction. Hence mankind, originally the Sons of God, became separated from God, and men became separated from each other. Essentially the Children of God, they became by wrong choice Children of the Devil, and sold themselves in bondage to him. From this bondage, God determined to deliver them, reconciling them to Himself by the life and death of His Son, Incarnate in Jesus Christ, in the One Man who had remained in such perfect union with God that He could say, "I and My Father are One."

It is only in the ransom passage that the word ἀντὶ, "instead of," is used; in all other passages the Christ gives His life "on behalf of" mankind and even in the ransom passage which on the surface suggests substitution, the context makes it clear that this is not what Jesus meant. Even here, "His death is looked upon as the culminating act of a self-sacrificing life. We are enjoined to serve our fellow men in the same way in which Christ served us. The giving of His life is chosen as the most signal instance of His ministry to His fellow men" and He links us up with His own passion and His ransom by adding immediately, "Who-soever would be chief among you shall be your minister. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" (Rashdall's *Doctrine and Development*, p. 129). Hastings Rashdall goes on to show what we have already noted—namely, that the doctrine of substitution suggested by the ransom passage received its death-blow in the teaching of Abelard: "Seldom indeed, has a theological system crumbled to pieces so rapidly, so completely and so irrevocably" (p. 134).

In spite of his quoting with approval the Greek poets who say that we are His offspring, there are passages in the writings of St. Paul which suggest on the surface that we are not originally the Children of God. He speaks of our being made the Children of God by adoption and grace, and he might have supported this assertion by quoting our Lord's own words, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel, when Jesus flings at the Pharisees the awful charge, "Ye are of your father the Devil." But this we have explained is

because they had deliberately denied their true Father in Heaven and gone over to the camp of the Devil.

I think the confusion arises through our modern notion of Adoption being that a certain family adopts a child who is not of their blood into their household; whereas Fredk. Dennison Maurice explains that when St. Paul uses the term, his reference is to the Roman Law, which speaks of a child being adopted in the sense of his being recognized at his coming of age, much as in England the Prince of Wales becomes King on the death of his father, but is not recognized as such until the Coronation. When therefore we receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, "*Abba, Father,*" we have been drawn back by our own act and by God's Grace into our true heritage as His children.

We have shown that God the Father has always been reconciling the world to Himself and that that effort of reconciliation has received its supreme expression in the life and death of His Son. Richard Lewis Nettleship believes that the doctrine of the New Testament is that God Himself gave (and is eternally giving) up what is dearest to Him in order to save the life of the world. (Death is self-surrender; all loss is a kind of death; the "only-begotten Son" is the summing up of what is dearest, most *one's own*), e.g. God can only be at one with His work, can only make it to be truly *His* work, by eternally *dying*—sacrificing what is dearest to Him. God does not thereby *cease to be*: he does not annihilate *Himself*. He lives eternally in the very process of sacrificing His dearest work.

Hence God is said to *be* "love"; for "love" is the consciousness of survival in the act of self-surrender: the consciousness of dying for another and thereby of being one with that other.

How if this were the truth of the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest"? That doctrine has at present been interpreted in two opposite ways—neither of them satisfying.

Suppose for a moment that all human beings felt permanently and universally to each other as they do now occasionally to those whom they love best. It would follow that all the pain in the world would be swallowed up in the joy of doing good. Then go further and suppose every particle of energy in the world animated by the equivalent spirit to "love" in the particular form of energy which we call human consciousness. So far as we can conceive such a state, it would be one in which there would be no "individuals" at all, in the sense in which "individuality" means mutual exclusion:

there would be a universal being in and for another: where being took the form of consciousness, it would be the consciousness of "another" which was also "oneself"—a *common* consciousness. Such would be the "atonement" of the world—God eternally living in His own death, eternally losing, and eternally returning to Himself.

If then the Atonement is found in the act of the Father reconciling the world to Himself, by giving up what is dearest to Him, His well-beloved Son; and if the Son is not separate from the human race nor a mere substitute for them, then humankind must find its redemption by a continual act of self-oblation. This oblation will not be obliteration, for each member of the human family in losing his life will find it.

How should belief in the Atonement, so explained, restore energy to the confused and dying world of our day? The question can best be answered by considering that century which saw the rise of the Christian Church. The Roman Empire, then, promised to the peoples of that world a New Order not unlike that which Nazi Germany is seeking to impose upon mankind now. The decaying empires of Egypt and Asia, the one-time democracies of Greece, and short-lived republics, such as Palestine with its internecine strife, had alike allowed the quislings of that day to betray them to Rome, in the first flush of her Imperial power. In face of the terror and efficiency of that Roman World, could anyone be expected to fling down the gauntlet or hope to arrest its juggernaut march? In such a world, wise would be the man who should say, "Ye shall have tribulations," but how impossible would it have been for him to add, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the World." Yet the impossible came true, and one of the followers of Jesus could say, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World," and writes to the children, the young men, the fathers, a if they had already triumphed over the spirit of evil incarnate in the Roman "Order." This was no idle challenge, for the Roman Empire began to fear for its very existence and the reign of terror against the Christians began.

That terror was met by a triumphant defiance in which was a curious quality of gaiety. Vibia Perpetua, the young Roman mother, about to be tossed by the bull, cheered her fellow martyrs up with songs and was visited by joyous visions, and when at last her turn had come and she leant against a pillar of the arena, bleeding and disarrayed, all unaware that she had been



attacked by the furious animal, she asked when her martyrdom was to begin; her mind was not there at all, but in Heaven with her Master. It was the same with Laurence, who before he suffered death by burning, was threatened by the Emperor Valerian with torture: "Your torturers, O Emperor, have no terrors for me. Long have I desired to sup at this table." There were some who turned back from the ordeal, but hosts of them went singing to their deaths, and of a truth the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

Now, if the Christians had been asked what was the source of their rapture, they could not have used the terms of a later theology and described it as the Incarnation and Atonement of their Lord, but it was, in truth, the substance of these doctrines which inspired them. They would have proclaimed that they were the followers of One, that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. They had been awakened by Him and caught up into His overmastering life. They had laid hold on eternal realities beyond space and time, which, if the whole world were to crumble into dust, would from everlasting to everlasting endure.

Ignoring for the moment that great mass of nominal Christians who "collaborate" with the World, there remains the problem of the enthusiastic minority. They would claim to be at one with the early Christians in holding these eternal realities of the spiritual life, and yet many, unlike them, are content with mere ambivalence work among the victims of the present World "Disorder." These escapists are relieved to postpone to a world beyond death the fulfilment of those spiritual realities with which they believe themselves to be inspired. They deceive themselves. They are not spiritual. For if they held the spiritual realities they would be filled with desire to see them embodied in this world of space and time. God, the Source of these realities, was compelled by His very nature to become incarnate.

It is because of this failure of Christendom that men sought in other philosophies and scientific theories, alternative schemes for the redemption of mankind. The most attractive and successful of these schemes was put forward in theory by Marx and Engels, and applied in practice by Lenin and the Communist Party in the Russian Revolution, which has changed the complexion of one-sixth of the world.

It is, to say the least, doubtful whether these vast changes are



actually due to the philosophy of Dialectical Materialism and not rather to that prophetic strain of Hebrew and Christian doctrine which can be traced in their teaching. In any case they were appealing to a world steeped in the ethical tradition of Jesus and his followers. The disciples of Marx and Lenin have recalled men to the Christian doctrines expressed in such sayings as: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," the International; "And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need," Communism; "If any will not work, neither shall he eat," a Workers' Republic.

But the splendid achievements based on these principles have been marred by mercilessness in the case of political opponents and of prejudiced, slow-minded peasant farmers; by a policy of lying and deceit which is not treated as a lapse from but as an integral part of their philosophy; and above all by the strait-jacketing of the mind and the banning of all avenues of public opinion that deviate from "the correct line."

Many of these distortions may be found in Christendom, past and present, but Christians confess them as crimes and do not defend them as virtues. I would be prepared to show that these distortions are a direct result of an atheist philosophy—namely, of a philosophy which professes to explain the world and world movements without Purpose, and therefore without a Purposer. Many of my friends would contend that this or that Communist thought or action is an unconscious acknowledgment of the good God, and flows from Him. They are right, but just in so far as thought and action flow from God, they cannot logically flow from what the Communists themselves describe as their Anti-God movement.

In spite of certain passages in the writings of Karl Marx and his followers, which suggest that they value human personality and demand economic changes to liberate and develop it, we are convinced that their basic philosophy, which denies Will, Personality and Purpose at the Source, tends to belittle human personality, and indubitably denies freewill, without which it cannot exist. Koestler, in his novel *Darkness at Noon* (p. 246), voices the doubts of a Russian Communist in these words: "For in a struggle one must have both legs firmly planted on the earth. The Party taught one how to do it. The Infinite was a politically suspect

quantity, the 'I' a suspect quality. The Party did not recognize its existence. The definition of the individual was: a multitude of one million divided by one million.

"The Party denied the freewill of the individual—and at the same time it exacted his willing self-sacrifice. It denied his capacity to choose between two alternatives—and at the same time it demanded that he should constantly choose the right one. It denied his power to distinguish good and evil—and at the same time it spoke pathetically of guilt and treachery.

"The individual stood under the sign of economic fatality, a wheel in a clockwork which had been wound up for all eternity, and could not be stopped or influenced—and the Party demanded that the wheel should revolt against the clockwork and change its course. There was somewhere an error in the calculation; the equation did not work out."

This confused thinking cripples creative action and we have shown that their remarkable achievements flow from that instinctive and prophetic heritage which derives from Christ and the early Church.

What then was the source of that quality in the Christian movement which struck a richer chord and which burnt with an unquenchable ardour which sent men singing to their death? It was the conviction that they had been caught up into the overmastering life of God, so that through them He was reconciling the world unto Himself.

If the Church of to-day, in all lands, is to recapture this spirit and recreate the world, it must identify itself with the life of God as expressed in Jesus Christ in the *whole* of His Gospel, the Passion of His life and death, and the might of His resurrection.

The *whole* of His Gospel was indeed good news to the workers and, if they had been far-sighted enough, to the rich who oppressed them. The Gospel of a New Order in which all men would be filled with abundant life.

Many more Christians now, than in the last century, would agree with this but would say: "You cannot change the world without first changing individuals." This is either a heresy or a truism. It is a heresy if you believe that converting individuals to a love of God and to an emaciated gospel will, of itself, reshape society. It generally means more mutual consideration between the classes while leaving the structure of society exactly where it was. Possibly that is why Frank Buchman could say, "I thank

Heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler," and certain Nazi leaders could reply with what amounts to: "Thank God for Frank Buchman." It is a truism if you believe that it is necessary to convert individuals in the matter of personal integrity and to that vision of the Heavenly Order with which they are determined to remedy this world's Disorder.

The Atonement, therefore, means to us, not a bargaining with Satan nor even a bargaining with God; not regarding Christ as the scapegoat for the world's sins, but as the Pioneer. He is the express image of the Father, and therefore of mankind created in the image of God. The Atonement means that, being grafted in Him, who is both God and Man, men are made at-one with God and return to their true nature.

It is of the very nature of God to create, and He is continually creating the world. Being once more caught up into His creative life, the Church will thereby be enabled to grasp this sorry scheme of things entire, to shatter it to bits, and then remould it closer to the heart's desire.

CONRAD NOEL.

## I I

RICHARD ROBERTS

### I

A HUMAN society declares its character in the persons whom it raises to prominence and power. Jesus spent his brief life on earth in what may be described as a stratified society. Its base was the common folk of Jewry, the simple, devout people of whom Joseph and Mary were typical. At the other extreme were the Roman masters of the country. Between these there was first, the religious gentry who kept state in the Temple at Jerusalem and their partisans, and, second, an important body of insurgent nationalists bent upon the recovery of national independence. We may say, summarily, that the society in which Jesus lived and died defined itself in the persons of three men: Caiaphas, Barabbas and Pontius Pilate. There are other figures in the picture, to be sure. There is, for instance, Herod. But his part in the story of Jesus was marginal; and we recall him only as the royal and dissolute voluptuary, the symbol of that gilded moral cesspool which has been hitherto the shame of every secular society. There is Judas, too; but he lives on as the perennial symbol of the moral treason which may lie side by side with good intentions in the soul of a man. The defining figures are the other three.

Caiaphas was the high priest, the leading figure in the public religion of the Jews. He conceived his business to be the maintenance of the *status quo* at the Temple, which meant in his mind two things: the preservation of the traditional institutions and observances of the Jewish religion, and a vigilant eye kept upon the vested interests of his wife's family in the Temple offices and their emoluments. And behind him was the cunning mind of Annas, his father-in-law, whom the Roman procurator had removed from the high-priesthood. To Caiaphas and his kind, Jesus was a dangerous radical, who should at all costs be put out of the way. It was he who, in the Sanhedrin, invented the clever formula by which it becomes, on due occasion, a religious duty to do to death an innocent man. The best we can say of him is that he was a

stubborn, religious conservative. At his worst, he was the shrewd man of the world who did not hesitate to pollute the precincts of the Temple to further the fortunes of the sons of Annas.

Barabbas is a less repulsive figure. He has suffered in the minds of Christian people down the ages because he was described as a robber. But *robber* was a euphemism for *rebel*. St. Mark says plainly that he was in prison for insurrection and for murder in the insurrection. Elsewhere, he is described as "a notable prisoner." He was, in all probability, the latest and not the last of a line of revolutionary leaders, who along the years sought to deliver their country from a foreign yoke. When the crowd in Jerusalem cried, "*Not this man, but Barabbas,*" they were, so to speak, not voting for one man against another, but for one doctrine of national destiny against another. Barabbas stood for what was left of an old dream of political power and secular glory, while Jesus sought to win His people to the fine prophetic view of itself as "the suffering servant" of Jehovah, whose mission it was to win the nations into the knowledge and obedience of the one true God. But Barabbas was their man, and that day they forfeited their destiny in the purpose of God.

Pilate was the Roman procurator, whose business it was to maintain the Roman ascendancy in Palestine, at all costs—whether of honour or truth or blood. He was the exponent of what we would describe as "power-politics." There is some reason to believe that he was, at bottom, a man of honour, put into an impossible position. In the discharge of his duty, but at the cost of his honour, he suffered the innocent to be put to death. Like Launcelot,

*"His honour in dishonour stood,  
His faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."*

He sacrificed truth and honour; but he preserved the Roman peace. He "sold out" to the totalitarian State. Pilate is a figure of tragedy.

Such then was the world into which Jesus came. A public religion without spirituality and therefore sterilized, keeping up routine observances, but dead and rotten at heart. It is probable that there were still in the land descendants of the people of whom Malachi spoke in his day, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often together"; but they were, as such people have always been, a small and unregarded minority. For the rest, religion was taken



for granted and left to the priests. Over against this indifference, and in sharp contrast with it, was a stubborn and militant nationalism, bent on evicting the usurping Roman and restoring the nation to a proud independence, and to what beyond that we can only conjecture. And facing both hierarchy and the patriots was the implacable imperialism of Rome. This was the world that killed Jesus.

It is much the same world still. The circumstances are changed, but the essence remains the same. We have still an institutionalized and therefore tepid religion, organized in Churches which are more concerned for their security than for the adventure, which is their business. And the outbreak of war is the humiliation of the Church, whose calling is to make all peoples one in Christ. Then, in Germany and Italy we have new and more successful reincarnations of Barabbas, the insurgent nationalist; and in consequence, the world is to-day a vast battlefield. . . . And Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Greece cry out to heaven against a world in which justice and mercy seem dead, and brute power is God. This is still the same world that crucified Jesus, lifting up its bloody and bestial head once more—recrucifying the Crucified in the mangled bodies of men for whom He died.

## 2

"Jesus Christ," says St. Peter, "His own self bore our sins in His Body on the tree." Not ours, surely? It happened long before our time. How could He have borne *our* sins in His body? Yet He did. For the sins that nailed Him to the tree are our sins. On that day they were enacted by other men; but they were our sins, none the less. What were the sins that sent Him to the Cross? They were spite, intrigue, falsehood, policy and cunning, treason and hatred, jealousy for vested interests in Church and State, the mob-mind—these were all there that day, and they are here still. The Drama is the same; only the actors are different. Our sins—the same old sins, that are to-day soaking the soil and staining the seas of the world with the blood of its children—the same unchanging sins of self-interest, worldliness, materialism, untruth and unbelief. And He bore them in His own body on the tree.

But that *once* was enough—enough to bear human sins. For God does not reckon human sins one by one. He goes behind the deed to the motive, and behind the motive to the Sin which has



become (as it were) an organic disorder in the soul of man. God is not concerned with the statistics of sins, but with sin, not with the quantity but with the substance of sin. That *once* on Calvary was enough to show sin in its true colour for all time. For what sin did that day was to slay in circumstances of dark contempt and shame, One who, as St. Peter says, "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, who when He suffered, threatened not," the altogether true, the altogether pure, the altogether lovely. In this world of relativities, our conflicts are never the clash of stark white and stark black, but of the rather more grey and the rather less. But on Calvary it was black against white, with no blurred edges, no twilight zone. It was the very apocalypse of sin.

But not of sin only. He bore our sin in His own body. He did not strike back. He did not retaliate. He did not rebuke His murderers, or call out to heaven against them. He took it all lying down, then? In one way, He did. He had the courage to take it lying down—a rare courage which we have not learned or even begun to understand. In another sense, however, He did not take it lying down. He made—if I may use the contemporary slang—an astonishing *come-back*. He bore our sins in His own body, endured all the pain and infamy of that hour in His own person, accepted it and suffered it in all its consequences, in Himself, so that none of it might recoil upon His murderers. All that He did; and then (marvel of marvels!) He prayed for them, prayed that they might be forgiven. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He is not content to pray forgiveness for them; He must needs find an excuse for them. Surely we may say that here we have the very apocalypse of mercy.

During the time of the Armenian atrocities at the turn of the century, Barry Pain wrote a series of memorable poems which appeared in a London morning newspaper. One of these poems began with the words: "Hell's burning through in Turkey." And it was, as it is to-day in Europe and Asia and Africa. It is the only language in which to describe what happened on Calvary. Hell was burning through on Calvary that day. But not that only. If Hell broke through, so did Heaven. How else shall we explain the miraculous moment when the Victim sought to save His enemies from the pit that they were digging for themselves? Surely if the Eternal ever broke into time, it was in that moment on Calvary.

Indeed, there is nothing for it but to believe something of that

kind and to think of Calvary "*sub specie æternitatis*," under the aspect of eternity. For all the nineteen centuries that have passed, the Crucified still dominates the world, in spite of dictators and power-politics, our imperialisms and our wars. The Cross remains in spite of us, "tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time." The Cross still stands, even though it do no more than make us uncomfortable. We cannot forget that moment. Yet Jesus died, the victim of a common vulgar conspiracy, in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, a mere incident in provincial administration. A thing done in a corner, yet it has at this time an immediacy and a timelessness from which we cannot escape. How are we to explain it save as an act of God, *the* act of God—the righteous love of the Eternal projecting itself into the affairs of man to convict men and nations of sin and to save them from it?

*The Word became Flesh.* However we explain these difficult words, they hold the Key to the mystery. It was the self-disclosure of God. *What Jesus did on Calvary God does eternally.* He is patiently forgiving sinners, reconciling His rebel children to Himself. Moreover, He does it as Jesus did. "While we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God. . . ." Jesus forgave His enemies before they had asked for it, even before they were penitent. He forgave without asking or receiving any restitution or hearing a word of contrition. So God forgives. He does not wait for our penitence, asks for no amends on our part. What amends could we make, in any case? He forgives simply and freely, without conditions, save only that we accept forgiveness. Calvary proclaims that we may be reconciled to God when we will. The door is wide open. He has forgiven: He is reconciled. The next step is our penitence, which is also implicitly the act which places us where God's forgiveness can reach us. This is the God with whom we have to do: and if I be asked why God has ordained this wide and free forgiveness, the only answer I can offer is that He is that kind of God.

Besides, God knows what we have not discovered—namely, that this is the way to cure rebels and lawless men. We, with what we call our horse-sense, punish criminals, and crime goes on increasing. If we had a little more God-sense we should know better. God should know how to deal with the creatures He has made; and He knows that the way of reconciliation and restoration is the way to deal with rebels and sinners. We might stand up to His rod: it is His clemency that breaks us down. His punishment

is pardon; His retribution is restoration. But if any man suppose that God's pardon is easy to bear, he has not yet experienced it. His answer to our sin is to forgive us. That is the humbling and heart-breaking rod of His love.

## 3

The Christian doctrine of Grace means nothing, if it does not imply, in some sort and to some degree, what we must describe as free personal relations between God and Man. It may be that the stress we lay upon, and the tenacity with which we cling to the idea of a personal God, springs in the first instance from our human desire for a God whom we may conceive to be accessible and responsive to our approaches. But to ascribe personality to God is not to imply that that personality in God is limited and conditioned as the range and reach of human personality are limited and conditioned by the temporal and spatial circumstances of terrestrial life. It is indeed true that there is in man at his best a persistent impulse to transcend the limitations of time and space—his prayer, his poetry, his music, his art, his philosophy bear witness to it. Yet he remains man in this world. None the less, he is *capax Dei* in some degree: and if he is apt to conceive God in terms of such personality, and indeed of the only personality which he knows, he may answer fairly that he has no other clue. That God is more than personal in the human sense is indeed beyond question; otherwise He would not be God. The Doctrine of the Trinity is in fact a virtual affirmation of the super-personality of God. On the other hand, an inaccessible God who lived

*"On Heights too high for our aspiring,  
Coldly sublime, intolerably just,"*

would in effect be no God at all.

If there be such a thing as salvation, it must be an affair between personal beings. In the New Testament view, the Divine party to this affair deals with us as sons or friends who have alienated themselves from God, but whom He would reconcile to Himself at whatever cost. It is therefore impossible that this momentous affair should be regarded as a quasi-legal transaction or a "deal" of any kind. "Transactional" theories of the Atonement inevitably compromise the Grace of God and are therefore inadmissible. They have their roots in a mistaken reading of

certain terms used in the New Testament as illustrations of the effects of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

At this point of time there should be no need to prove that human nature cries out for salvation. The fact is patent. In time of peace and prosperity we tend to develop a good conceit of ourselves which dulls our consciences and disables us from realising our chronic moral insolvency. We become sufficient to ourselves and suppose that our moral defeats and failures are no more than passing peccadilloes. As for God

*"Pish! He's a good fellow  
And 'twill all be well."*

We may go to church and confess ourselves miserable offenders; but no pang of guilt accompanies the confession. But in a time of war, no man who possesses and exercises the most rudimentary gift of moral realism and takes it seriously can preserve any *amour propre*. For war is moral defeat and failure on a colossal scale. In the last war, a writer told us that "war is the purge of repleted kingdoms." That may be true, so far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. What we have to say is that it is a monstrous violation of the moral order ordained by God for the life of man. What men and nations sow, that also they shall reap; and far too often it is war. War is the climax and Nemesis of sin: and no party to a war is sinless. But the roots of the corporate sins of nations are in the soul of the citizen. It is an old story: "All we like sheep are gone astray; we have turned each to his own way"; and the end of it is always calamity of one kind or another. The gentlest pacifist is not free of his share in the universal guilt. The taint is upon us all. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Until we have grasped this radical fact about ourselves and do something about it (and there is only one thing that we can do) we shall go on living in chaos—whether it be the chronic chaos of national societies in times of peace or the too frequent and more tragic chaos of war. Our self-regard and self-seeking, our *hubris* and greed—which are our sin—bear their own bitter fruit. They alienate us from God and from one another—whether as peoples or as persons. This disintegration may go deeper and involve us in chaos within ourselves. The plague of neuroses and psychoses which has visited contemporary society on an ominous scale is a consequence of our prevailing godlessness and egoism. Before the last war, Sir Oliver Lodge, the English scientist, had told his

fellow countrymen that "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing." In those days, the general tendency was to minimize sin and even to explain it away; and even the retribution of the First World War did not suffice to correct that levity and enable us to re-discover what Lord Morley—himself not a Christian believer—had once described as "that horrid burden and impediment on the soul which the Churches call *sin* and which, by whatever name you call it, is a real catastrophe in the moral nature of man."

The reduced view of sin in the modern world is to be accounted for, partly and perhaps chiefly, by the contemporary obsession with the idea of progress. This idea in its current form is a direct derivative from the dogma of evolution. After the first sharp shock of resentment upon the publication of the Darwinian doctrine, we incontinently surrendered to it and began to apply it in every direction. In particular, we introduced it with the study of history and ethics, and in doing so failed to make adequate allowance for the evolution of human freedom. We surrendered to the conception of human perfectibility without taking account of the evidence of human perversity which is to be found both in history and even in one's own personal experience. We began to conceive of a universe predestined to progress. We formed a mental picture of a world which was slowly but steadily moving up an inclined plane to a temporal paradise. In this picture there was no place for the Christian view of sin; our moral defeats and transgressions were only untoward incidents in the great cosmic ascent. Our imperfections and perversities appeared to be no more than infantile distempers which the forces of progress, aided by a genial Christian culture, would enable us to outgrow. In the early years of this century, this tendency was reinforced by the circumstance that on the whole life was easy. There was an unusual material prosperity. Distant echoes from Putumayo, an occasional strike, a small war—such things did no more than send a faint flutter of discomfort across the face of our complacency. The general evenness and comfort of the ordinary man's life made him dull and insensitive to the moral tragedy of the world. On the whole things were going very well indeed. The old chariot of Progress was forging onward bravely: and presently we should arrive. Just where we were going to arrive did not seem very clear. That, however, did not matter. Wherever, or whatever it was, we were getting there. . . . And



then, suddenly and awfully, the chariot was pitched over a precipice; and for four weary years we writhed in sorrow and terror at its foot.

And now we are going through it all again—even more desperately. I wrote in 1917: "This war is the greatest revelation of the moral perversity of man since Calvary. It is idle, if we want to grasp this situation with any degree of realism, to attempt to reach a moral judgment upon it by weighing the comparative culpability of the parties to it. Before God, the world of man is a solidarity, and mankind a single entity. 'There is none righteous, no not one.' We are all involved in the universal disorder of which the grim events of our time are the results and symptoms, and which has involved Europe in a tragedy of blood and tears. The one thing we cannot do after this is to belittle sin or to explain it away." If this was true in 1917, it is doubly true to-day.

## 4

How then is salvation mediated to man? All through the ages the essential simplicity of the divine salvation has been compromised by attempts to interpret it in terms of a formal transaction. It has been affirmed to have been the payment of a ransom, an act of substitution, a propitiation, or a satisfaction and the like. As partial suggestions of the significance of the self-sacrifice of Jesus these terms may have some little validity; but they belong rather to the sphere of rhetoric than of reason. I have already said that to conceive of the death of Christ as any kind of "deal" compromises the Grace of God. A God who cannot forgive His disobedient children without promising a ransom to the devil or the satisfaction of a law is a conditioned God—and, in effect, no God. He is merely *one* of the factors which determine the course of the world, if He cannot act for man's salvation without compounding with what other powers may be active in the universe.

The proper starting place for the interpretation of the meaning of the Cross is the doctrine of the Incarnation, which is the affirmation that God has revealed Himself in History, and in a historical Person. In that revelation, the summit and crown was reached on the Cross—in a deed and a word. A deed, because Jesus had forgiven those who had contrived His death, before He prayed God's forgiveness for them. Socrates drank his hemlock with a jest on his lips, and there is something admirable in that



laughing gallantry in the face of death. But here we stand in another world. Historically, the Cross is the supreme moment in the chequered moral and spiritual pilgrimage of mankind. It is something that happened here in our world. But because Jesus was what He was—the Son of God and the Son of Man, what He did and said on the Cross has a timeless and universal validity. The Doctrine of the Incarnation is not without its difficulties. But it is, at the least, the symbol of the mystery of the unspeakable spiritual and moral transcendence of Jesus in life and death, over the bravest and fairest moments of common flesh and blood. Yet He too was common flesh and blood.

And now we know that we have to do with a *forgiving* God. But what is forgiveness? It is many things: it is cleaning the slate and giving the offender another chance. It is to free the sinner and to write off his guilt. It is to obliterate the past with its contumacy and disobedience. But all this is negative; and the divine forgiveness is positive. We are also *reconciled*. The enemy is made friend. The prodigal is found and restored. It is Atonement, in the original sense of that noble word. The act of forgiveness is from beginning to end a direct affair between persons. Its source is the free, unmeditated Grace of God; its destination is the penitent sinner.

It is not, however, to be supposed that the gift of forgiveness annuls or suspends the working of the moral order. For sins committed, whether in the body or in the mind, there is no remission until that which has been sown has been reaped. The order of Grace does not cancel the moral order. That is the significance of Jesus' saying: Not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass till all be fulfilled. What forgiveness does is (in the old phrase) to put us right with God.

But to be right with God involves us in new troubles. It is when we know ourselves forgiven that we find it more and more difficult to forgive ourselves. To be at peace with God is to cease to be at peace with ourselves. It is only then that we know ourselves to be miserable sinners; and the knowledge cleaves our complacency and brings it to the dust. Then it is that we begin to learn humility, which is the beginning of our growth in grace. But not even then do we cease to be miserable sinners in our own eyes. For growth in grace makes our moral sense more sensitive, and so our moral failures assume a still graver aspect. We are miserable sinners to the end of the chapter; and the rule of life day by day

must be a continued cycle of renewed penitence and renewed forgiveness. That would seem to be the significance of the Puritan saying that "the perseverance of the Saints" is an endless sequence of new beginnings.

To all this there are profound and far-reaching corollaries, especially in the field of ethics. But this essay has already reached its prescribed term.

RICHARD ROBERTS.

## H. WHEELER ROBINSON

A WELL-KNOWN philosopher,<sup>1</sup> contemplating the Christian faith from without, remarks that it was the preaching of "Christ and Him crucified" which overcame the world; "Therein was a new poetry, a new ideal, a new God." The points are well taken, even though Santayana goes on to say, "The moving power was fable." It is by the inherent poetry of life that men are stirred to action—by the common intimacies of hearth and home, by that loyalty to the land of their birth that is focussed in a few familiar spots, by friendships and fellowship, by self-denying heroism, by sympathy with suffering. On the Cross, and especially in the words spoken from it, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," they have seen the culmination of this poetry. Out of it there has come the Christian conception of what life can be made—a life of the spirit's triumph over all untoward circumstance, a life of spiritual victory over material forces, a life of peace within, fulfilling the promise, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Above it all, they have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the God who forgives the evil of man's ways, and welcomes the penitent without other demand than that of trust in Him, the God who suffers in His Son, and takes upon Himself the burden of the world's guilt. This is the victory of faith, which has overcome the world, and its promise and prophecy, its base of operations and its vanguard are the Cross of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

1. When we begin to interpret the appeal of this poetry by the inferior logic of analysis, we may well fix our eyes on one dominating aspect of the Cross—that it sets forth in clearest fashion that *vicarious suffering* which is deep-rooted in all our social relations, indeed in all life as we know it. The long process of biological evolution which has preceded human life is as surely

<sup>1</sup> Santayana, *Little Essays*, p. 61; quoted by Logan Pearsall Smith, *Milton and His Modern Critics*, p. 39, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore the true centre of Christian thought; cf. Ignatius Loyola, *Exercitia Spiritualia* (p. 265 of 1696 Ed.): "*Hic tandem est meta laborum. Contemplare Christum, fixum in cruce, et animam agentem.*"

marked by "altruism" as by "egoism," if we may use such terms in relation to unconscious or instinctive activities. The social solidarity of animal life in attack and defence, the parental care and self-sacrifice of animals for their offspring, the sympathy of animals with one another in suffering,<sup>1</sup> the general instincts of the family and the herd, witness to something as fundamental as any impulse to competitive individualism. So, also, when we come to human life, its sociality is really as marked a feature as its individuality. We are all bound up together in the bundle of life, for better, for worse, profiting by the good of others, whether predecessors or contemporaries, suffering by their evils, inevitably and involuntarily. All such suffering can broadly be called "vicarious," since it is borne in the place of others.<sup>2</sup> But it is only the voluntary acceptance of such suffering which makes it "vicarious" in the fullest sense. Such acceptance, even if it be no more than uncomplaining submission to what cannot be avoided, gives it a new and spiritual quality. But the fullest significance comes from the voluntary choice of suffering, or rather of some end that is seen to involve suffering, for the common good.

Of such a nature was the suffering of Jesus on the Cross. He was no helpless victim, whose only merit was to endure patiently the misfortunes of an unhappy career. He deliberately chose to suffer. Nothing makes that clearer than the dramatic scene portrayed in the Gospel according to St. Mark: "They were on the road up to Jerusalem, Jesus going in advance of them; the disciples were appalled and those who followed were afraid."<sup>3</sup> The eagerness of that forward-striding figure, detached from His reluctant followers, when seen in the light of Cæsarea Philippi,<sup>4</sup> shows that He is deliberately fulfilling a purpose. By challenging the Jewish authorities at their headquarters, He is voluntarily giving His life "a ransom for many." The full meaning of that phrase does not yet arise; but at least it implies that Jesus goes, of His own free choice, to do that which (as He clearly sees) will bring Him to the Cross. By so choosing He crowns the long series of vicarious sufferings which runs up through Nature into the whole history of mankind.

If, then, the Christian faith claims (as in one form or another it

<sup>1</sup> C. Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, pp. 156 ff. (Ed. 1901); see also Tourguénieff's prose poem on a sparrow's sacrificial defence of its helpless young (quoted by A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 44).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the terms "vicar," and "vice."

<sup>3</sup> x. 32.

<sup>4</sup> viii. 27 ff.; note here the first declaration of the spiritual necessity for His suffering (verse 31).

must do), that the vicarious suffering of the Cross was not man's alone, but God's also, this is no heterogeneous fiction foisted on credulity by dogmatic theologians. It is simply the further extension upwards from human life of that which we have seen to extend downwards into lower realms of being. Thus, there is unity of principle in the universe, common to creation, conservation, redemption. The whole created order is bound up in the bundle of life *with God Himself*.<sup>1</sup> More and more as I look at the Cross, this authentication of vicarious suffering is what it means to me, in its first and most direct appeal. God, who made the world, and bears the ultimate responsibility for its suffering (which can by no means be wholly explained on any theory of retribution), reveals Himself as sharing, in His own great way, the suffering of His creatures. It is the only satisfying solution to the problem of suffering. The Cross of Christ is God's answer to the cry of all sufferers, the answer of a sympathy that convinces us of its own reality by actually sharing our burden.<sup>2</sup>

2. But the suffering of the Cross is not to be regarded as a merely human symbol of the suffering of God. That would not yield the distinctively Christian values, which depend on the *divine* initiative. Nor does it seem to me at all adequate to divide the unity of the personality of Jesus (a unity made clear in our earliest sources) into a human nature which suffered, and a divine nature which could not suffer. This was one of the baneful influences of Greek metaphysics upon Christian theology, and perhaps we may see, as one of its results, the absence of any adequate doctrine of the work of Christ in the Early Church. Certainly, neither the conception of an infusion of immortality into the human race by the Incarnation, nor the doctrine of a ransom paid to the devil, has stood the test of time. The Biblical suggestions of a sacrifice for sin<sup>3</sup> and of an actual victory won over the powers of evil<sup>4</sup> were indeed maintained and were highly profitable for devotion, but neither of these metaphors can be worked out into an adequate theory for us, who do not share the practices and presuppositions of those days. The Reformers, in their revival of the doctrine of penal substitution, could appeal to certain elements in the unsystematized utterances of St. Paul, and the doctrine

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 29 (of course, in a somewhat different application of the figure).

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xlv. 1-4; Hos. xi. 8, Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. liii. 10, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Luke x. 17, 18; Col. ii. 15.

enforced the objectivity of the law of righteousness, but to-day it is increasingly seen to issue in a "transactionalism" which tends to rob God of His glory of giving, and to represent Him as a judge who administers the law, rather than as a God of grace. A favourite conception of modern times has been that of Christ as man's representative, who makes for man that offering of a perfect penitence which man in his sinfulness could not make, and so justifies the divine forgiveness. But, however true and suggestive this conception is in itself, it does not really make the essential contacts, with man on the one side and with God on the other, which are needed to bridge that gulf between man and God which man's sin has created. Substitutionary penitence is a fiction, and we are still left asking, as with all conceptions of an offering acceptable to God, how that which man offers can also be God's redeeming act.

If, however, we begin with the historical realism of the Bible, i.e. simply with Christ's will to suffer on man's behalf, whatever the fruit of that suffering, then faith in the grace of the unseen God encounters no difficulty on the side of religion, whatever difficulties may be raised on the side of philosophy. By the overwhelming assertion of Christian faith, Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, however variously that manifestation be construed in the Christologies of the Church. Now just as far and as closely as we identify Jesus with the presence in time of the God of eternity, so far and so closely may we believe that what is true of Jesus is true of God. One great meaning of the Cross is, as we have seen, the direct extension of the principle of vicarious suffering to God Himself. That which He has ordained for His creatures, that which was actualized in His Son, is proclaimed as true also of that Being whom no human eye has seen or can see. We cannot possibly picture God by our imagination or fully comprehend Him by our reason. But if Jesus is indeed "the image of His substance"<sup>1</sup> made accessible to our vision, and if the outstanding feature of that manifestation is vicarious suffering in the fullest sense, our reason is justified in prolonging that principle into the very nature of God, and we can say that God suffers with us and for us and (by His Holy Spirit) in us.

What objection can be raised to such a faith? Chiefly that to make God accessible to suffering (in such ways as are possible to spiritual Being) is to conceive a limited God, frustrated in His

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3.



purposes, since not even God can be supposed to choose suffering *for its own sake*. The answer to this objection is a simple one, which should be sufficient. If God is suffering through limitations originating beyond Himself, He ceases to be God in the full sense which the Christian faith demands. But if the limitations spring from a self-ordained purpose, and are voluntarily accepted as part of the fulfilment of that purpose, there is no ultimate frustration, but rather an enrichment, of the majesty of the Most High. God, as well as His Son, endures the Cross, despising the shame for the joy that was before Him.<sup>1</sup> The Biblical teaching is that God created man free either to obey or to disobey Him, and the fact of that freedom (within definite limits) is confirmed by all our experience and the record of it in history and literature. But our disobedience is the defeat of His purpose and must bring sorrow and spiritual suffering to God in its own degree. God cannot truly be said to love man if the child's disobedience does not bring suffering to the father. But because that Father is God and not man, the suffering will not be helpless and unavailing, as it so often is in our human relationship. It will take its own great place amongst the realities of the spiritual universe. The voluntary acceptance of that suffering by God, in the persistent pursuit of a purpose that cannot at last fail, will transform the suffering into grace as surely as did the voluntary acceptance of the Cross by Jesus Christ transform its shame into glory. Is not the believer, then, standing on firm ground when he claims that the second meaning of the Cross to him is the suffering of God, of which the visible Cross is part? May not his penitent faith find the assurance of welcome and the promise of forgiveness in this visible part, this historical actualization of the suffering of God, suffering inflicted by his own sin, and freely endured because of God's love for the sinner?

3. But it may be said that such an interpretation of the Cross does not take us beyond the so-called "subjective" theory of the Atonement, according to which it is simply the revelation of the love of God in Christ which moves men to conform to His will. Those who are content with such a theory often protest against the charge of "subjectivity," since the revelation of God in Christ is historically as "objective" as any fact of history can be. But even so, ought we to be, can we be content with such a theory? Does not

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 2. The reverent application of these words to the Father (*mutatis mutandis*) must not be confused with ancient patripassianism, for which (in the Sabellian form) Jesus was a transient extension of God, without real personality (cf. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*,<sup>2</sup> I, p. 473).

the experience of the Church, set forth in Scripture, in the history of doctrine, and in our own consciences, testify to the conviction that Christ has wrought a vital and necessary work of redemption, beyond that of revelation—that, in fact, the revelation is not the redemption, but the redemption is the content of the revelation? If we are to maintain this conviction (often expressed in crude and even repellent metaphor) it can be only by a deeper analysis of what sin and the guilt of sin really mean. Here again the Cross can help us, for it is as truly a disclosure of man's sin as it is of God's grace.

To say this, does not mean that the sin of those who crucified Jesus is inherently greater than other sins before or since. He himself said of it, "they know not what they do." The point is rather that the background of the Sufferer's sinlessness throws into unique contrast the ugliness and horror of moral evil. The more we exalt Him, the more of God we see in Him, so much the more do we see what the evil in our own hearts really is. Given a like opportunity for the clash of our vested interests, our personal ambitions, our prejudice and our cowardice, with all for which Jesus stood, dare we think that we should come out better than the men who crucified Him? Decent folk would, indeed, shrink from inflicting the physical torture, for His Cross itself has taught men greater sympathy with suffering, but there are other ways of rejecting Him. The Cross has a strange and awful power of revealing the human heart to itself as "deceitful and desperately wicked," just because it shows sin as what it ultimately and essentially is—antagonism to grace, "enmity against God."<sup>1</sup>

This antagonism of the world to God is not to be measured by the particular sins we remember individually with inner shame and self-loathing. Behind them all, as their source, is an attitude of will, a dark mystery of sinfulness, unexplained by the ancient doctrine of "Original Sin," or by the modern doctrine of an evolutionary development from lower forms of life. All we can say of it is that the use or abuse of personal freedom can never be explained without explaining it away, but that it is exercised within a social environment which besets us all like a close-fitting garment,<sup>2</sup> and constantly hinders our course. Here, also, as in regard to vicarious suffering, we are made to know our "social solidarity," not only with those who crucified Christ, but with the whole human race. Our consciousness of a common alienation from

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 1.

God extends the personal responsibility of each of us to our share in the sin of the whole race. He who has had this individual and racial *guilt* brought home to himself is hardly likely to be content with a gospel dealing only with the present *power* of sin. Dimly or clearly he will be likely to see the need for deliverance from the guilt of sin, the sin of an irretrievable and irrevocable past, both his own, and that of the race.

Only a superficial reading of human history and an inadequate self-examination can explain the frequent identification of guilt with the consciousness of guilt, often with the suggestion that guilt is merely the psychological product of a peculiar environment. In fact, the sense of guilt seems to deepen with the growth of saintliness, and we must consider the testimony of many generations if we are not to be misled by the transient decline of Biblical thought at the present time. Just as surely as the moral consciousness in man needs God to account for it, so the moral failure of man needs God to remedy it. The sense of guilt witnesses to our relation with God in this matter; our sin is not the concern of ourselves or of our fellows alone; it concerns God. This is the particular case of the general truth that time belongs to eternity, on which any Christian interpretation of the Cross must rest.

4. With this emphasis on the guilt of man's sin, marking its significance in the eternal realm of God's purposes, we may now ask what divine forgiveness will involve, and look to the Cross of Christ for our answer, since it is there that forgiveness is actually experienced by the believer. Behind the words, "Father, forgive them," there are the Person and the Work of Christ to give to the prayer its deeper meaning. So behind every preaching of the Gospel of forgiveness, there is God reconciling the world unto Himself, which must mean not simply moving us to a changed attitude, but also removing every obstacle to forgiveness, such as that to which our sense of guilt witnesses. In this aspect of reconciliation, there are two obstacles to be removed, first the burden of man's responsibility for the moral evil of the world, and second, the temporal defeat of God's eternal will to holiness, so far as this is matter of past history.

Moral evil, like moral good, is first known for what it is by its material and spiritual consequences. So long as it lurks in the uncertain realm of possibility, it can often be plausible enough to capture man's desire. But when it becomes fully intelligible by its translation into the actuality of life, the consequences characterize

the volition,\*and declare its quality. Jesus, being what He was, did not share with man the experience of actual sinning, and therefore could not share our (always imperfect) penitence; but He could and did share in the suffering consequent upon sin throughout His whole life, and most of all in the physical and spiritual sufferings of the Cross. In this sense of resultant suffering, and in this sense alone, can He be said to share the burden of our guilt. We introduce a legal fiction or a psychological impossibility if we say that the penal wrath of the Father was directed against Christ.<sup>1</sup> We may rightly say, however, that by freely accepting physical and spiritual suffering which was the result of man's sin, He identified Himself with those who bore its guilt. That supreme act of sympathy would mean something very real, if it were no more than a heroic human gesture, as of the captain of the sinking ship, who stays to the end with its crew. But, for Christian faith, this is the act of God, and its meaning is that *He* wills to bear the burden of our guilt, so far as this is possible to the Holy One.

How far, indeed, is it possible or even conceivable? Only, I think, in the way made visible on the Cross. Sin and guilt cannot as such ever enter into the full consciousness of holy personality. The saint can know profound sympathy with the sinner suffering from the results of his own evil will, but never with the sinner in his actual sin. What does enter into the holy consciousness of man or God is *the suffering due to sin*; sin, in fact, has to be translated into its ultimate equivalent of suffering,<sup>2</sup> to exist there at all. So we may venture to think of the holy consciousness of Jesus, with its unimaginable sensitiveness and so, with fitting reverence and humility, of God in His eternal Being. In Him we live and move and have our being, even as sinners; without this life in Him we should cease to exist. But our sinfulness cannot be *in* Him, in the same sense as is our existence. It must be transformed within His consciousness, into equivalent suffering, as it was for Jesus; or rather, the suffering of the Son of God was an earthly part of this heavenly suffering. God's will thus to suffer, and not simply to react in holy wrath, is His grace. This transformation of the intrusive element into something of iridescent beauty<sup>3</sup> is like that of the grain of sand transformed into the pearl. "Where sin

<sup>1</sup> Even Calvin refrains from saying that *Deum fuisse unquam illi vel adversarium vel iratum* (*Institutio*, II, xvi, 11).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter V, "Suffering and Sin," of *Suffering, Human and Divine*, by H. Wheeler Robinson.

<sup>3</sup> The *polupoikilos sophia* of Eph. iii. 10.

Christian obligation, which is at once its constant spur and its constant humiliation and rebuke, derives from that Cross on which God gave Himself in giving His Son.

The Cross is thus that creative act of God which, when confirmed by the Resurrection, and dynamized by the Holy Spirit, established the Church, the Body of Christ. Already at the Cross, in that Johannine word, "Behold, thy son! . . . Behold, thy mother," we see the beginning of a new fellowship of the Cross, created through a common relation to it. But this is no other than that "fellowship of the Spirit," which is the New Testament inner definition of the Church. It is only as the mind of Christ controls the minds of believers in their mutual relations that the essential Church is found. Only then is the work of redemption which was begun on the Cross carried forward to its completion, each believer being led to "fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake, which is the Church."<sup>1</sup> So far as this mutual relation of *agapé* is achieved through the Holy Spirit, so far does the Church continue, in its own degree, the offering of the Cross.

The inscription on the Cross, in self-evident mockery, declared Jesus to be "the King of the Jews," and was written in Hebrew and Latin and Gréek. If we wished to replace the mockery by reverent truth, we could hardly do better than write the inscription in terms of the Pauline Benediction—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Each is in a richer language than that of Hebrew or Greek or Latin, for it is uttered through the actuality of life, divine and human. The Benediction also, like the historical inscription, says the same thing in three languages, for the love of God which is the eternal Gospel is actualized in the grace of the crucified Christ which is its historical form, and is ever renewed in the fellowship of believers through the Holy Spirit, which is the experience of redemption, the reproduction of the Cross.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 24.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

TO theologize in the midst of a war-racked world is no irrelevant frivolity. On the contrary, it is, more than ever, an imperative necessity. In vain shall we preach Christ crucified if we rely solely on our endeavours to arouse devotional sentiment; doubly in vain if we would be heard in a world in which human life is immeasurably cheapened, human pain and self-sacrifice an everyday commonplace, human heroism and human wickedness multiplied *ad nauseam*. "Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?"<sup>1</sup> Nothing whatever—we shall be compelled to reply—to a world familiarized with daily crucifying and being crucified unless we have penetrated beneath the externals of the nineteen-centuries-old events on Golgotha and have revealed something of their present-day relevance in the light of their eternal purpose. "Emotional reaction to a crucifix is no adequate substitute for a doctrine."<sup>2</sup> Worse, the emotional reaction will itself be a spurious escape-mechanism if it be prompted otherwise than by doctrine. Almost may we be tempted in our day to envy the apostle who could find the preaching of the Cross to be "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness."<sup>3</sup> Nineteen centuries of familiarity have bred a more negative and grievous contempt—the contempt not of positive scorn, but of bewildered indifference, or the still more blasphemous contempt of self-indulgence in groundless emotionalism. Truly, to seek to "understand what we believe," to dare to probe ever more deeply into the timeless significance of Christ's work in time, is essential if we are to present the Cross as something more than the daily commonplace of heroic death for a "good cause."<sup>4</sup> Only so can we proclaim that the Cross is the Tree of Life, and the Crucified the manifestation of the righteousness of God made available to man.

"The achievements of the Saviour," wrote St. Athanasius, "are of such kind and number, that he who would try to enumerate them is like a man who gazes at the expanse of the ocean and

<sup>1</sup> Lam. i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Macaulay, *The Death of Jesus*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Rom. v. 7.



would wish to count its waves."<sup>1</sup> Manifold, diverse, and even contradictory, as would appear the interpretations of theologians of the atoning work of Christ, it is consoling and impressive to observe that they would seem to be unanimous in declaring it to be beyond human capacity and wit fully to comprehend it. "It is impossible," added St. Athanasius, "to take in the whole; even when one has reckoned up all one can, more remains beyond one's thought than all one thinks to have comprehended." This recognition that the Atonement is ultimately unfathomable has been echoed throughout the ages, even by those who, like St. Anselm,<sup>2</sup> would appear to claim to have mastered the matter so successfully as to have plumbed the unfathomable ocean and to have contained it all within the covers of their treatises.

Consoling as is this unanimity of humility in a sphere in which there has been so great a diversity of opinion, the thought of the inexhaustibleness of the mystery of the Atonement is hardly encouraging to the symposist who would condense the whole matter within the compass of a brief essay. For my part, I must abandon any hope or pretence of doing so. Rather, therefore, would I use the space at my disposal to seize the opportunity of commending to the attention of my readers a wisdom which it is itself unable to encompass. I shall think the space well used if, by means of the opportunity it affords me, I may succeed in inducing some of my readers to give more consideration than is customary to the *theologia crucis* of my master St. Thomas Aquinas. If in so doing I seem to shirk the task of offering an original contribution, I would plead that there is little I could say out of my own head or from my own heart which I do not owe to my understanding of Scripture and of ancient catholic and apostolic tradition as analysed and co-related for me by St. Thomas. Socrates, it may without extravagance be recalled, contributed none the less effectively to the archetype of symposia by regaling his fellow banqueters with the praises of the wisdom of Diotima rather than by instructing them in his own. My own purpose, however, is not to confound my fellow contributors after the manner of that illustrious precedent, but, contrariwise, to suggest that in the *Summa* of St. Thomas will be found an account of the subject in which the truth in other accounts is respected and enhanced, their inadequacies supplied, and their seeming antinomies resolved.

<sup>1</sup> St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, liv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> St. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?* I. ii.

I am far from contending that St. Thomas's treatment of the subject is such as would render nugatory all subsequent inquiry. On the contrary, he himself is emphatic that the subject is inexhaustible;<sup>1</sup> and it is unquestionable that many particular aspects of the Atonement have been studied with an intensity and thoroughness, both before and since his time, which St. Thomas did not pretend to equal. Nor would I maintain that it is final in the sense of being impervious to criticism and readjustment in points of detail in the light of subsequent research and reflection. I would content myself in these pages with suggesting that, in the Soteriology of Aquinas, the material provided by Scripture and tradition is so sifted and harmonized, and the truth contained in seemingly conflicting views of Christ's work on the Cross so illumined and deepened by the harmony it has made of them, that it cannot lightly be disregarded by anyone who would seek a comprehensive, and not one-sided and distorted, understanding of the meaning of the Cross.

Even this will seem an extravagant claim to those who are acquainted with the very "bad press" which St. Thomas's thought on the Atonement has received from later critics. Curiously enough, the only Roman Catholic writer to undertake a history of the doctrine of the Atonement in English dismisses Aquinas in a couple of platitudinous pages—excusably enough if we accept his bold assumption that "the reasoning of Aquinas on the Atonement is contained in four Questions of the *Summa*."<sup>2</sup> "*Multa, non multum*" was the stern verdict of Harnack, who could find in St. Thomas no coherent doctrine at all, but only a "wavering" between mutually contradictory views which "prevents any distinct impression arising."<sup>3</sup> Seeberg was far more discerning, observing how some at least of the apparent contradictions present a really comprehensive synthesis which follows logically upon St. Thomas's previous detailed analysis of the nature of sin and its consequences<sup>4</sup>—but Seeberg's *History of Dogma* is unhappily less familiar in England than that of Harnack. Canon Grensted recognizes that "Harnack is hardly doing justice to Aquinas,"<sup>5</sup> but agrees with him in finding in the *Summa* "some confusion of thought." "St. Thomas refuses to be consistent," Canon Grensted

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III. i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> H. N. Oxenham, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. VI, p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, III<sup>3</sup>, pp. 436 ff.

<sup>5</sup> L. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 157.

tells us—rather perhaps by way of praise than of blame—but he discerns that the “mystical tendency” of the saint’s writings enables him to combine “objective” with “subjective” accounts of the doctrine, and “to give a far more living account than his predecessors of the way in which the Atonement takes effect in the heart of man.”<sup>1</sup> Gustav Aulén’s engaging exuberance has little time or patience for the toilsome and microscopic analysings of the schoolmen, and after announcing a primitive but revolutionary theory of the Atonement which will outmode “objectivism” and “subjectivism” alike, concludes in contempt of all theorizers in general and all schoolmen in particular<sup>2</sup>—though not, be it said in gratitude, without having recalled us persuasively to the consideration of an aspect of the Atonement which no comprehensive theory can exclude. Hastings Rashdall, though much more sympathetic to the aims and methods of the schoolmen, finds in St. Thomas “no new idea emerging,” and adds, “in this matter, as in so many others, he does little more than give definite form and outline to the traditional theology of the past.”<sup>3</sup> But even in this restricted but by no means inconsiderable field, Rashdall did not consider Aquinas very successful. For he too endorses Harnack’s verdict with but mild qualification, and concludes that “there is no single leading idea in the Thomist doctrine on the subject.” Far greater pains to understand St. Thomas was taken by Dr. Franks in his chapter on “The Dominican Theology,”<sup>4</sup> in which much of the relevant material from the *Summa*, though little co-ordinated, is excellently summarized. However, he too was later to charge St. Thomas with “uneasy shifting” between incompatible viewpoints.<sup>5</sup>

Confronted by so distinguished a cloud of witnesses for the prosecution, at best damning with faint praise, it might seem presumptuous to urge that St. Thomas deserves a hearing, still less that his work on the Atonement merits patient study, least of all to urge its superlative merit to be precisely that synthesizing quality which so many have failed to find in it and have with such unison denied. Here I can do no more than testify to my own findings; only in the *Summa Theologica* itself can the evidence be studied; to it I shall appeal by frequent references.

<sup>1</sup> L. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, tr. A. G. Hebert, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> H. Rashdall, *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 373.

<sup>4</sup> R. S. Franks, *History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, Vol. I, Chap. V.

<sup>5</sup> R. S. Franks, *The Atonement* (Dale Lectures, 1934), p. 84.

The fact is that the Thomist picture of the Atonement is painted on too vast a canvas, and with too rich a wealth of analytical detail, to be easily reproduced in miniature by the essayist, the historian of dogma or the contributor to symposia. The *Summa Theologica* is so closely knit a unity that it is at our peril that we isolate any part of it from the whole. Each several part tends to decompose if it be amputated from the main organic structure. This is particularly true of that part which deals more directly with the Cross. So far from it being true that "the reasoning of Aquinas on the Atonement is contained in four Questions of the *Summa*," its real worth as well as its coherence will escape us if we do not recognize at the outset that the framework of the picture is in fact co-extensive with the entirety of the *Summa Theologica*. We should be nearer the mark in seeing the whole *Summa* as a treatise on the Atonement, for there is hardly a page in it which is not, in greater or less degree, contributory to the complete exposition of the doctrine. For the First Part deals in turn with the two terms to be "at-oned"—with God and Man. The treatise on the divine attributes, for instance, is indispensable if we would purge anthropomorphic misconceptions from our understanding of the Saviour's "placating" or "satisfying" of His Father, while retaining the truth which such imagery would convey. In particular, the treatise on the attributes of Mercy and Justice and their interrelation<sup>1</sup> is indispensable if we are to understand how the concepts of acquittal and satisfaction are reconciled in the later treatment of the manner in which our salvation is accomplished through the Cross. Again, the treatise on the Love of God,<sup>2</sup> showing its essentially creative character, must likewise be mastered if we are to understand how grace and forgiveness are made available to us by the Crucifixion; the treatise on the Trinity if we would understand how our atonement is an "adoption of sons" and the realisation of the divine image within us;<sup>3</sup> the treatise on the creation and the divine purpose therein if we would see how the Passion and Resurrection achieve a "re-creation."<sup>4</sup> The content of the Second Part is no less relevant. For

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica*, I. xxi, *passim*, especially Article 4. All subsequent references are to the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas unless otherwise stated. (Large Roman figures refer to "Parts," small Roman figures to "Questions," Arabic numerals to "Articles.")

<sup>2</sup> I. xx, *passim*. Cf. development in I-II. cx. 1, and cxiii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. Mersch, "Filii in Filio," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, May-August, 1938.

<sup>4</sup> I. xlv, lxv, xciii to cii.

its subject matter is man as the image of God and the realisation of that image in so far as man's activities and endeavours are to be directed to, and consummated in, "one-ment" with God, his last End as well as his Creator,<sup>1</sup> and it is essential that we should master this if we would correctly understand the doctrine of the Third Part, which, as the "*consummatio totius theologici negotii*,"<sup>2</sup> expounds how that "one-ment," destroyed in principle by sin, is re-established by Christ. In the Second Part also will be found such indispensable preliminaries as an exhaustive analysis of how sin mars the divine image and destroys the ground of man's primordial "one-ment" with God,<sup>3</sup> of how law may both aid and hinder the regaining of that "one-ment,"<sup>4</sup> of how divine grace—*really* healing and transforming because of the creativeness of divine love, and hence no legal fiction or extrinsic imputation—is unconditionally necessary for that "one-ment" and ever increases it by the faith, hope and love which it engenders in us.<sup>5</sup>

These facts indicate something of the extent and magnitude of the toil which awaits the student who would contemplate the Cross through the eyes of St. Thomas, but at the same time they indicate the very great reward which awaits him for his pains. Too often does writing on the Atonement fail to satisfy on account of failure to undertake these necessary preliminary studies of the God who atones and the condition of the mankind which is atoned. If we make no effort to diagnose the disease, we shall be gravely handicapped in our efforts to analyse and appreciate the remedy, and we shall make little headway in diagnosing the disease if we have no knowledge of the healthy organism and of the designs which it is intended to fulfil by its Maker. In nothing, perhaps, is much contemporary preaching of the Cross so divided and incoherent as in its reply—or its failure to reply—to the crucial problems: To what questions is the Cross the answer? To what is the Crucifixion relevant? What situation does it meet, and how does it meet it? What disunity does the death of Christ "at-one"? Which does it teach us?—

*"Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing, end them?"*

<sup>1</sup> See the Prologue to the First Section of the Second Part of the *Summa* ("Prima Secundæ").

<sup>2</sup> Prologue to the Third Part.

<sup>4</sup> I-II. xc. to cviii.

<sup>3</sup> I-II. lxxi to lxxxix.

<sup>5</sup> I-II. cix to cxiv.



Karl Barth and his disciples have rendered a great service in challenging us on this issue of the whole character of our preaching of the Cross. Is it legitimate to proclaim the Cross as the divine answer to purely human questions, the divine remedy for human needs and ills which fall under our daily experience, and which may be studied independently of Revelation in history, psychology and sociology? If it is so, then how is it so? If it is not so, then are we not guilty of treason to the Word of God, and of cheating our fellow men, if we offer the Gospel as a panacea for ills with which it is not, in fact, concerned? Or is the Cross, as the Barthians themselves would seem to maintain, the response only to questions which faith in God's Word alone can perceive? Is it anything besides the "acquittal" from a "sin" whose character is discerned only in its revelation on the Cross itself? And if this be so, is the preaching of the Word of God, and particularly of the Cross, the preaching only of an enclosed system which alone knows the right questions as well as the right answers, and which has no relevance to the everyday happenings, the rights and wrongs, the joys and ills, of our ordinary mundane existence?

St. Thomas, it is true, does not raise these questions in this form, and he answers them by implication rather than directly. But in principle he had resolved them long before he came to treat directly of "the benefits provided for the human race" through the life, death and Resurrection of our Saviour.<sup>1</sup> Elaborating and applying those principles, a Thomist will neither evade nor accept this Barthian "Either-Or." His master's careful analysis of the interrelation of Grace and Nature compels him to reply with a triumphant but discriminating "Both-And" which alone does full justice to the Gospel in its integrity. The very first article of the *Summa* proclaimed, as do Barth and Brunner, that the meaning of man's existence and the purpose of man's creation is known only by faith in the Word of God. He knows that they *can* only so be known, for they are concerned with God's free and secret will to destine man for a oneness with Himself which infinitely transcends all creaturely capacities and all possible human deserts. Hence he too knows that "we really only know ourselves when we really know God."<sup>2</sup> For the Thomist knows well that God's revelation alone can teach us that He made man in His own image and

<sup>1</sup> Prologue to the Third Part.

<sup>2</sup> E. Brunner, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 78.



likeness and all that that implies.<sup>1</sup> For him, too, the divine image, realised in Adam and marred by Adam, is revealed again and in supreme perfection in the Person of Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> in such wise that His life and death show forth in ever deeper contrast the heinousness of our sin and the "filthiness of our righteousness,"<sup>3</sup> "Revealing to us by His life, and supremely by His death, our infinite need, Jesus at the same time reveals Himself as satisfying it."<sup>4</sup> Certainly, the remedy explains the disease as well as the disease the remedy. But whilst a Thomist will affirm all that a Barthian affirms, he must with equal emphasis deny his denials. For while he knows that the primordial oneness with God and the primæval divine images were God-given and God-reflecting, he knows also that that original oneness was the source and centre of a oneness of man also upon the "natural" and empirical level—firstly, of the individual within himself, inasmuch as all his constituent elements with their variety of function are subordinated to his spirit, which in its turn is subordinated to God;<sup>5</sup> secondly, of human society inasmuch as from this interior and God-centred harmony of its components arises the perfect harmony of men among themselves in the achievement of perfect community;<sup>6</sup> and thirdly of men, both individually and socially, with the rest of creation.<sup>7</sup>

Oneness with God is something which, of its very nature, man by himself is unable to achieve. The finite cannot be "at-oned" with the Infinite save by the initiative and power of the Infinite. Man cannot meet God unless God first meets man; man cannot ascend to God unless God first condescends to man, raising him to

<sup>1</sup> I. xciii, *passim*. How grievously Dr. Brunner, in his *Man in Revolt*, has misunderstood the Thomistic doctrine of the divine image will at once be evident from even a casual reading of this Question, especially of Articles 4 and 8. So far from it being true that St. Thomas and traditional Catholic theology teach that man is "in the image of God" by the bare fact of his rational nature, St. Thomas is here most emphatic that the image is realized only in the measure in which we are transformed into His likeness by knowledge and love of Him imparted by grace. Man's intellectual nature is (Art. 4) only the "*aptitudo naturalis*" ("obediential potency") which makes him *capax Dei*, i.e. capable of being elevated by divine power to know and love God and so to reflect Him. The title of this Question—*De Fine sive Termino Productionis Hominis*—is particularly to be noted. It signifies that in this progressive actualization of the divine image is the whole purpose for which God has given man existence. That "God made me to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him for ever in the next" is the very first thing which a Catholic child learns in his catechism.

<sup>2</sup> III. vii, viii, xxiii, xxiv; cf. I. xxxv.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxiv. 6.

<sup>4</sup> A. B. Macaulay, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> I. xcv. 1 sqq., I-II. cix, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> I. xcvi. 4.

<sup>7</sup> I. xcvi. 1-3.

Himself by His grace.<sup>1</sup> That grace in its turn involves the focussing of man's faculties on God in knowledge and love by faith, hope and charity—faith and hope giving place to vision in the full consummation of at-one-ment hereafter.<sup>2</sup> So when in the Third Part of his *Summa* St. Thomas comes to inquire into the purpose of the Incarnation and the manner and effects of Christ's atoning work, he, in the very first place, recalls that teaching of Scripture and the Fathers according to which God, by becoming man and suffering with man and for man, supremely gives ground for our faith, confidence to our hope, enticement to return so unsurpassable a manifestation of His boundless love, and example of all those virtues which flow therefrom and which transform our attitude in our dealings with God and with our fellow men.<sup>3</sup> Thus St. Thomas integrates into his picture, and indeed gives pride of place to, all that considerable body of Scriptural and patristic teaching according to which the Saviour achieves our at-one-ment through the persuasive force of His love and example which engender corresponding disposition in ourselves. For it is through the possession of these "theological" and "infused moral" virtues that we are rendered Christ-like, and through conformity to Him participate in His "at-one-ment," ever more realising the divine image and so fulfilling our divine purpose.<sup>4</sup> Yet within the larger context of the *Summa Theologica*, this teaching receives a far deeper significance than it could do in any purely "subjective," "moral-influence" theory of the Atonement such as had been propounded by Abelard and has found favour in England in the writings of a Moberley, a Rashdall or a Franks. For St. Thomas had shown that divine love must differ not only in degree, but in kind from all created love. One creature loves another because of the good he perceives in him. The Uncaused does not love us "because" we are good; on the contrary, we are good because He loves us.<sup>5</sup> His grace and love are creative of any good or love we can have.<sup>6</sup> Thus St.

<sup>1</sup> I-II. cix, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> I-II. lxxviii. 4 *ad* 3; cf. lxii, *passim*, cx. 3 and 4, and detailed developments in the treatises on the theological virtues in the "*Secunda Secundæ*."

<sup>3</sup> III. i. 2; cf. xlvii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> I-II. Prologue, v. 4, etc.

<sup>5</sup> I. xx. 2, xxiii. 3 *ad* 1, etc.

<sup>6</sup> I-II. cx. 1, etc. Cf. Kierkegaard's "When God becomes a Teacher, His love cannot be merely secondary and assisting, but is creative, giving a new being to the learner, or, as we have called him, the man born anew" (*Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 23, 24). The whole of this lovely and penetrating "poem" on "God as Teacher and Saviour," with its emphasis on the need for infinite love to be both creative and self-kenotic, is, however unwittingly, a superb paraphrase of St. Thomas's doctrine of the motives and necessity of the Incarnation and Crucifixion.

John's "We love Him because He first loved us"<sup>1</sup> implies something much more profound than the arousing of a "purely human" love of which we are the authors and disposers. His love, revealed in His life, and supremely in His death, is the source as well as the object, the maker and motor as well as the motive, of the love whereby He permits us to join our love with His. So St. Thomas is able to allow even more to the "exemplarist" and "subjective" aspects of the Atonement than the exemplarists and subjectivists, at the same time avoiding that unanswerable objection that "where moral-influence theories of the Atonement come to grief . . . is in their having nothing to offer as a ground of assurance to the awakened and alarmed conscience."<sup>2</sup>

But the Atonement wrought by Christ must involve more than this positive gift of sanctifying, at-one-ing grace and corresponding faith, hope and charity. It cannot be a restoration of primæval innocence and integrity; innocence once lost, cannot be regained.<sup>3</sup> Sin has entered in; and while God can forgive, He cannot forget. God Himself cannot bring it about that what *has* been, has *not* been.<sup>4</sup> The ravages which sin has brought into the world remain, and the order which Christ offers to the world must be a new order which takes full account of the whole situation which sin has introduced.<sup>5</sup> In contrast with the original order of Innocence, it is a new order to meet the exigencies of the disordered world of Experience. Man's "at-one-ment" by Christ must therefore involve, not only the reintroduction of those positive factors which originally united man to God and enabled him to reflect Him in his attitudes and activities (*promotio in bono*); it must also introduce the negative factors of deliverance from sin and must meet all the new needs which sin and its manifold complications have imported into the human situation (*remotio mali*).

For, by asserting his ethical autonomy over against his God, by seeking to "be as God," by constituting himself his own arbiter of good and evil, by becoming self-centred instead of God-centred, man ruptures the original harmony and oneness with his Maker.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. John iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Macaulay, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. I-II. lxxxix. 3.

<sup>4</sup> I. xxv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Hence the distinction between the *status naturæ integræ* and the *status naturæ reparatæ* throughout I-II. cix.

<sup>6</sup> For St. Thomas's exegesis of Gen. iii, see especially I. xciv. 4 *ad* 5, I-II. lxxxix, 3, II-II. clxiii, clxiv.

Destroying his relationship with his Centre, man thereby defeats the purpose of his existence, shatters the divine image (though he does not and cannot annihilate it) and renders himself liable not only to the eternal loss of his destiny, but also to the innumerable temporal consequences of this disorientation.<sup>1</sup> Precisely *because* he is "*spoliatus gratis*" he is also "*vulneratus in naturalibus*."<sup>2</sup> Not that his nature is destroyed,<sup>3</sup> but the threefold harmony on the empirical level which, as we have seen, was the consequence of the original righteousness in which man was created, becomes disintegrated.<sup>4</sup> Man becomes the subject of conflict and tragedy, the microcosm a microchaos—individually and socio-politically—while his relationship with the rest of "nature" becomes a struggle.<sup>5</sup> So sin begets sin,<sup>6</sup> and the vicious progeny spawns throughout the whole course of human history. For "grace perfects nature," not as an additional luxury or superfluous superstructure which nature can afford to do without, but as that which, given the divine predestination to a goal which transcends nature, alone gives nature its *raison d'être*, and without which the human individual and human society alike decompose into their heterogeneous and mutually conflicting constituents.

Space will not permit me to examine in detail St. Thomas's painstaking analysis of the character of sin and its manifold consequences in time and eternity, nor the logical nexus he shows to exist between them. But it is only in the light of such an exhaustive scrutiny as that which is given us in the Second Part of the *Summa* that we can appreciate the profundity and coherence of the treatment of the Atonement in the Third Part. In St. Thomas's hands theology is indeed an exact science. The various terms and phrases which Scripture and the Church Fathers had used to interpret Christ's atoning work are seen to be not merely a congeries of inadequate human expressions to express the inexpressible and with no mutual interconnection, but each is seen to express a particular divine response to one or another particular human need which sin had introduced into the world. Thus, the very fact that God assumes our human nature does away with the ground for fallen man's agelong respect for, and fear of, the spiritual powers of evil (anthropologists and psychologists may appreciate the importance of St. Thomas's "*ne sibi diabolum præferat*" as a purpose of the Incarnation); it gives ground for a new reverence for

<sup>1</sup> I-II. lxxxv to lxxxvii.<sup>2</sup> Cf. I-II. lxxxv. 3, 5.<sup>3</sup> I-II. lxxxv. 1, 2.<sup>4</sup> I-II. lxxxii. 1, 3.<sup>5</sup> I-II. lxxxvii. 1.<sup>6</sup> I-II. lxxxv. 4, lxxxvii. 2.

our human nature (*Agnosce, o christiane, dignitatem tuam; et divinæ consors factus naturæ, noli in veterem vilitatem degeneri conversationis redire*); but at the same time, because it reveals the necessity of grace if we are to achieve our destiny, it breaks down our moral independence and reliance upon our own "works."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the fuller achievement of the purpose of the Incarnation in the Passion may be designated by a variety of terms and phrases corresponding to the variety of fallen man's needs. Thus, it is *reconciliation* inasmuch as it re-establishes the basic relationship with God that sin had destroyed;<sup>2</sup> it is *forgiveness* and *acquittal* inasmuch as, by that re-establishment the fault or guilt (*culpa*) of sin is annihilated;<sup>3</sup> it is *heaven-opening* and *hell-closing* inasmuch as it recalls us to our eternal destiny, removes the obstacles thereto, and so abolishes that eternal loss of God (*pæna damni*) which is the first consequence of sin;<sup>4</sup> it is *deliverance* inasmuch as it frees us from the enslavement to creatures and to the domination of the powers of evil which sin brings in its train;<sup>5</sup> it is *redemption* inasmuch as it transfers us from that enslavement and re-establishes us as the free friends of God;<sup>6</sup> it is *sacrifice* inasmuch as, by the unstinting oblation of the anarchic Self (St. Paul's "old man") it consecrates us to God and reintegrates us into the divine community;<sup>7</sup> it is *meritorious* inasmuch as it disposes our human nature for the reception of the divine gifts;<sup>8</sup> it is *satisfaction* inas-

<sup>1</sup> III. i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> III. xlix. 4.

<sup>3</sup> III. xlix. 1. It must be understood that for St. Thomas forgiveness is no mere extrinsic imputation. The guilt of sin is really abolished by the inpouring of its opposite, sanctifying grace. Thus forgiveness is simply the negative aspect of the (positive) justification of the sinner, which in its turn is *gratia prima*. Cf. I-II. cxiii. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> III. xlix. 5.

<sup>5</sup> III. xlviii. 4, xlix. 2.

<sup>6</sup> III. xlv. 1, 2, 3, xlix. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>7</sup> III. xlviii. 3, xlvii. 4 *ad* 2. Many different elements contribute to St. Thomas's conception of sacrifice, but its essential constitutive is in consecration to and/or by God by the alienation of an object from its ordinary profane use, which consecration and alienation are expressive of the love-motived consecration of the offerer. Thus its effect and purpose (as in the definition borrowed from St. Augustine) is that we may "adhere to God in holy community," for the oblation and consecration of the self *eo ipso* integrates us into the God-centred community. (Compare Mr. Middleton Murry's "Politics of Self-Transcendence" in his fine *Defence of Democracy*.) On Calvary Offerer and Offered, Priest and Victim, Symbol and Reality are merged in the Person of the Crucified, and, in accordance with a favourite idea of the Fathers, the *Ecclesia* is thus begotten as the new community engendered as a result of His sacrifice. For further elucidation of St. Thomas's idea of sacrifice, see I-II. cii. 3 and II-II. lxxxv, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> III. xlviii. 1. This article presupposes the doctrine of St. Thomas according to which merit is a *causa dispositiva*, fitting a subject to receive a perfection (*merces*) as its due. Cf. I-II. cxiv, *passim*.



much as our Saviour, by Himself undergoing the penal consequences of sin (*pœna sensus*), delivers His members from their liability (*reatus*) to them.<sup>1</sup>

This last point is particularly noteworthy. St. Anselm had sought to answer the question, *Cur Deus Homo?* solely in terms of satisfaction. Not so St. Thomas. The need to make satisfaction is for him only one (and that the last) of the ten reasons which he enumerates as contributory to the purpose of the Incarnation, and it is only one of the many which he sees to have been effected by the Passion.<sup>2</sup> For St. Thomas, unlike St. Anselm, there is no absolute necessity for satisfaction apart from the abundance of divine love; there is no ineluctable necessity for the reparation of "God's Honour" and "offended Majesty." God has no need of satisfaction, and He could very well have reconciled man to Himself without it. God is not tied to any demands of Justice outside His own control.<sup>3</sup> Nor does the fact of Christ's paying the penalty of sin of itself demand forgiveness; its *direct* effect is not to cancel the guilt of sin (*culpa*), but only its penal consequences (*servitus* and *pœna*).<sup>4</sup> Finally, that we are enabled in Him to treat with God on a basis of justice and reciprocity is itself a gift of God's love and mercy.<sup>5</sup> This radical correction of St. Anselm is among the most important of St. Thomas's contributions to the subject. He directly refutes St. Anselm's theory,<sup>6</sup> but, unlike other of St. Anselm's critics, he does not throw out the truth of it together with the error. Satisfaction still has its place, a place whose importance will be recognised by all who understand that

". . . no man well of such a salve can speak  
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace."<sup>7</sup>

But that place is a subordinate one, and it has no longer, as for St. Anselm, a purely Godward reference. The "need" for satisfaction is to be found, not in a supposed need of the divine Majesty to receive it, but in the need of man to be able to pay it. That he is enabled by his Saviour to do so is due solely to the infinity of God's love for him, which drives Him to every extremity in His will to supply every genuine and worthy human need.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> III. i. 2 *ad* 1, xlviii. 2, xlix. 3; cf. I-II. lxxxviii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> III. i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> III. xlv. 2 *ad* 3.

<sup>4</sup> III. xlviii. 4.

<sup>5</sup> III. xlv. 1 *ad* 3; cf. I. xxi. 4.

<sup>6</sup> III. xlv. 2 *ad* 3.

<sup>7</sup> Shakespeare, Sonnet 34.

<sup>8</sup> For more detailed comparison of the respective doctrines and methods of Anselm and Aquinas (and Abelard) see L. Hardy, *La Doctrine de la Rédemption chez saint Thomas*, and J. B. Reeves, O.P., "The Speculative Development" in *The Atonement* (Cambridge Catholic Summer School Lectures, 1926).



And indeed, in the last analysis, the whole of St. Thomas's elucidation of the Atonement, its purpose, its various effects, the manner of its accomplishment, will be found to be reducible to one only explanation—God's love for man. For even as I cannot (for reasons which I have no space fully to demonstrate, but which I hope to have sufficiently indicated) agree with those critics who charge Aquinas with "wavering," "uneasy shifting," and "inconsistency," so still less can I agree with Rashdall that "there is no leading idea in the Thomist treatment of the subject." St. Thomas does not indeed make the mistake of trying to enclose all the vast richness and variety of our Saviour's achievements on our behalf into any one human category. If we try to explain it all by any single human concept—whether it be satisfaction (with Anselm), moral influence (with Abelard), acquittal (with much Reformation theology), equivalence (with the dominant tendency of much Counter-Reformation theology), conquest (with Aulén)—we shall inevitably tend to restrict and so falsify the whole. But "leading idea" there is, though that idea is of something infinite and altogether beyond our finite powers of comprehension—the Love of God. This note is struck in the very first article of the Third Part, in which it is shown that an Incarnation of God is, though transcending all deserts and expectation of the creature, something essentially befitting the boundless Self-giving generosity of infinite Goodness. This is made yet more manifest in the next article, in which it is insisted that divine omnipotence could, by a single *fiat*, have saved mankind without any recourse to Incarnation and Passion, but that God did, in His "loving wisdom" and "wisest love," choose that method of salvation which, though most costly to Himself, most fully supplied our human needs. This thought is dominant throughout the whole of the Third Part, but nowhere so much as in the reorientation which St. Thomas has given to the concepts of merit and satisfaction; for in virtue of these aspects of Christ's atoning work we are enabled to receive His gifts, not as beggars receiving largesse, humiliated and ashamed, but—with and through Christ—on a basis of equality, of payment and desert. Thus those very aspects of the Atonement which, in the hands of theologians of lesser vision, may appear to involve a sordid, legalistic commercialism, and to imperil the whole character of Christ's work as a labour of love and mercy, appear in the *Summa* as sublime manifestations of God's graciousness and courtesy. For the fact that "God gave His Son to satisfy for man . . . is a

deed of more abundant mercy than had he pardoned our sins without any satisfaction at all."<sup>1</sup>

Two further points must be noted if this altogether inadequate sketch of the Thomist teaching on the Atonement is not to convey a quite false impression. Christ's sufferings are *vicarious*, in the sense that He, the Innocent, undergoes deliberately the consequences of sin. They are *substitutional* in the sense that His undergoing of them has an efficaciousness and power which they cannot have apart from Him. But they are *not* substitutional in the sense of being actually efficacious to us independently of our subjective disposition and co-operation. For St. Thomas, as for Newman and Catholic theology generally, "Christ provides, but does not give, salvation." Our Saviour by His living, dying and rising is not only the efficient but also the exemplar cause of our at-one-ment, not only the Agent but the Model, and His agency takes effect only to the extent that we are "configured" to Him in His life and death and thereby share in His triumph.<sup>2</sup> If He is to be to us the Way, the Truth and the Life, we must follow His way of sorrows and self-abnegation, believe His Truth and participate in the power of His life conveyed in His sacraments. For His Passion "is made efficacious within us through faith and through the sacraments of faith,"<sup>3</sup> which, symbolizing His death, and "effecting what they signify," bring about the effects of His passion within us.<sup>4</sup>

As St. Thomas's treatment of the Atonement is intelligible only as a sequel of what has preceded it in the First and Second Parts of the *Summa*, so it is incomplete and maimed without its own sequel in the latter pages of the Third Part, in the treatises on the Sacraments, and particularly those on Baptism and the Eucharist. By Baptism our unregenerate selves are crucified and buried with Him,<sup>5</sup> and in the Holy Eucharist His Passion is "shown forth until His coming again,"<sup>6</sup> and in Him and with Him we are made "One Bread, One Body."<sup>7</sup> For a Thomist a doctrine of the Atonement which is not crowned and completed by a doctrine of the real presence of the atoning Body and Blood must seem a crippled and impoverished doctrine. For it is in the Mass that the atoning work of Christ is both made present to us and applied to us, and by the Mass that the barriers of space and time which separate us from

<sup>1</sup> III. xlvi. 1 *ad* 3.

<sup>2</sup> III. lxix. 3 *ad* 2, 3, etc.; cf. Rom. vii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> III. xlviii. 6 *ad* 2.

<sup>4</sup> III. lxii. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.

<sup>6</sup> I Cor. xi. 26.

<sup>7</sup> I Cor. x. 17.

Calvary are broken down. No effort of "existentialist" theology to explain the "contemporaneity" of the deed done "once for all" in terms of an extra-temporal, extra-spatial "I-Thou" relationship can suffice for a Thomist to make present here and now the decisive "moment" of Calvary. Only the simple and adorable God-ordained rite of the sanctification of the bread and wine and their transformation into the Realities which they signify, the eating and drinking of the Victim whereby He dwells in us and we in Him,<sup>1</sup> can make of that Deed a really present and effective reality and not a mere psychological image or memory of a remote event.

Lastly, it must be insisted that for St. Thomas, and for the Catholic believer generally, the full consummation of at-one-ment is eschatological. The fullness of Christ's work is accomplished not in His First Coming but in His Second. The Cross is not the end but the means, but it is the indispensable means. The way of the Cross which we have prepared and which He has trodden must be trodden by us also. Not with resentment or mere stoic endurance, but because of love for Him and of our oneness with Him who "has become man that man may become God."<sup>2</sup>

But eschatology for a Thomist cannot mean merely an "invasion" of the transcendental order at the end of time. The Kingdom of heaven is already, though embryonically, among us and within us. The Cross does not preach to the Christian the passive endurance of injustice with no corresponding effort to uproot injustice; though it insists that only in the doing to death of self, in turning the other cheek to affronts to the self, is injustice to be overcome. Since Christ dwells and operates in him, and he is a member of the cosmic Christ, it belongs to the Christian, not merely to await, but to collaborate in bringing about the eschatological triumph. Suffering, humiliation and death—spiritual and physical—are the means, not merely to the reward of "pie in the sky," but for working here and now for the regeneration of individuals and societies. If the humanitarian, purely immanentist "Left Christianity" of an older generation is a treason to the supernaturalism and eschatologism of the Gospels, the exclusively transcendentalist "new orthodoxy" of a younger generation which has no message for the natural and historical order but to condemn it, is no less a treason to Him who went about doing good, healed not only sin but the temporal effects of sin, had compassion on the

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 56.

<sup>2</sup> St. Irenæus, quoted by St. Thomas viâ St. Augustine in III. i. 2.

multitude, and bade us pray and work for the coming of His Kingdom on earth. The Thomist's understanding of Grace and Nature will forbid him to fall into either extreme of error, while enabling him to affirm the truth in each.

The Cross bids us "lose our life to find it." With Christ we must be "nailed to the Cross," not merely for our own good in another world, but for the at-one-ment of ourselves and our fellows in this. If it bids us submit to injustice, it is precisely in order to conquer injustice and to do our part to usher in the Reign of God. "The Cross awaits not only the individual man but also society as a whole, a State or a civilization. . . . In its application to social life the Cross does not imply an acceptance of social conditions, but rather an acceptance of the idea of inevitable catastrophe, revolution and radical social changes. It is a profound error to regard the Cross in a conservative light."<sup>1</sup>

The Christian is sent with His Master, "not to judge the world, but to save the world." If he refuses to follow his Master in the way of the Cross, he is not His disciple.<sup>2</sup> He is, with the world, "already judged."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N. Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 38, etc.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 17, 18.

## CHARLES WILLIAMS

ANY personal statement on such a subject as the present is bound to be inaccurate. It is almost impossible to state what one in fact believes, because it is almost impossible to hold a belief and to define it at the same time, especially when that belief refers not to objective fact but to subjective interpretation. A rhetorical adjective will create a false stress; a misplaced adverb confuse an emotion. All that can be hoped is that a not too incorrect approximation may eventually appear. And anything that does appear is, of course, to be read subject to the judgment of the Christian Church, by whom all individual statements must be corrected.

Joseph Conrad, in his *Letters to Madame Paradowska*, says: "Charity is divine and universal Love, the divine virtue, the sole manifestation of the Almighty which may in some manner justify the act of creation." The last phrase is not perhaps one which would be used by the normal Christian. But the need for some such credible justification of the act of creation is one of which even the normal Christian may, humanly speaking, be very conscious. Many sermons and pious books are devoted to no other end. Much discussion of "faith" means nothing else. Nor (still speaking in terms of human feeling) is such a justification unnecessary. The original act of creation can be believed to be good and charitable; it is credible that Almighty God should deign to create beings to share His Joy. It is credible that He should deign to increase their Joy by creating them with the power of free-will so that their joy should be voluntary. It is certain that if they have the power of choosing joy in Him they must have the power of choosing the opposite of joy in Him. But it is not credible that a finite choice ought to result in an infinite distress; or rather let it be said that, though credible, it is not tolerable (to us) that the Creator should deliberately maintain and sustain His created universe in a state of infinite distress as a result of the choice. No doubt it is possible to Him.



This would be true, even if it were we ourselves who had made that choice. I am far from saying that we did not. It may be that we were "in" Adam very much more particularly than is often supposed; it may be indeed that we, in that pre-fallen state, *were* Adam, and that it was we who chose. *Fuimus ille unus*, said Augustine, *quando fuimus in illo uno*; we were the one when we were in the one. But popular doctrine in the Church has rather taken the view that we did not consciously choose that original sin, but are at most its successors and inheritors. The vicarious guilt of it is in us; the derived concupiscence is in us. There remains for us the eternal dying which is its result.

This is the law which His will imposed upon His creation. It need not have been. Aquinas said that God wills His own goodness necessarily, but other things not necessarily. Our distress then is no doubt our gratuitous choice, but it is also His. He could have willed us not to be after the Fall. He did not. Now the distress of the creation is so vehement and prolonged, so tortuous and torturing, that even naturally it is revolting to our sense of justice, much more supernaturally. We are instructed that He contemplates, from His infinite felicity, the agonies of His creation, and deliberately maintains them in it. I do not refer merely to the agonies of the present time; they are more spectacular and more destructive, but not more lasting, nor perhaps very much worse, than the agonies of a more peaceful time. But man has not often known a more peaceful time. And if he had, in the times that he has known, the very burden of daily existence too often seems a curse. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together.

This then is the creation that "needs" (let the word be permitted) justifying. The Cross justifies it to this extent at least—that just as He submitted us to His inexorable will, so He submitted Himself to our wills (and therefore to His). He made us; He maintained us in our pain. At least, however, on the Christian showing, He consented to be Himself subject to it. If, obscurely, He would not cease to preserve us in the full horror of existence, at least He shared it. He became as helpless as we under the will which is He. This is the first approach to a sense of justice in the whole situation. Whatever He chose, He chose fully, for Himself as for us. This is, I think, unique in the theistic religions of the world. I do not remember any other in which the Creator so accepted His own terms—at least in the limited sense of existence upon this earth. It is true that His life was short, His pains



(humanly speaking) comparatively brief. But at least, alone among the gods, He deigned to endure the justice He decreed.

There is another point of the same kind. It is often said that He was put to death by evil men. Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod are denounced. It is, of course, in some sense true that it was evil which persecuted Him. But I have myself felt that the destructiveness was more common to our experience if we hold, as we very well may, that Caiaphas and Pilate were each of them doing his best in the duty presented to them. The high priest was condemning a blasphemer. The Roman governor was attempting to maintain the peace. At the present time, for example, it is clear that one man must suffer for the people—and many more than one man, whether they consent or not. It is, no doubt, inevitable; it may be right. But we can hardly blame those earlier supporters of the same law. Humanly speaking, they were doing the best they could. They chose the least imperfect good that they could see. And their choice crucified the Good.

It is this agonizing fact which is too often present in our own experience. Certainly our sins and faults destroy the good. But our efforts after the good also destroy it. The very pursuit of goodness becomes a hunt; that which was to be our lord becomes a victim. It is necessary to behave well here? We do. What is the result? The destruction of some equal good. There is no more significant or more terrible tale in the New Testament than that which surrounded the young Incarnacy with the dying Innocents: the chastisement of His peace was upon them. At the end He paid back the debt—to God if not to them; He too perished innocently. With Him also (morally) there was nothing else to be done.

He had put Himself then to His own law, in every sense. Man (perhaps ignorantly, but none the less truly for that) executed justice upon Him. This was the world He maintained in creation? *This* was the world He maintained in creation. This was the best law, the clearest justice, man could find, and He did well to accept it. If they had known it was He, they could have done no less and no better. They crucified Him; let it be said, they did well. But then let it be said also, that the Sublimity itself had done well: adorable He might be by awful definition of His Nature, but at least He had shown Himself honourable in His choice. He accepted Job's challenge of long ago, talked with His enemy in the gate, and outside the gate suffered (as the men He made so often do) from both His friends and His enemies. Which of us has not known

and has not been a Judas? He had no where to lay His head? And we? "Behold my mother and my brethren."

This then has seemed to me now for long perhaps the most flagrant significance of the Cross; it does enable us to use the word "justice" without shame—which otherwise we could not. God therefore becomes tolerable as well as credible. Our justice condemned the innocent, but the innocent it condemned was one who was fundamentally responsible for the existence of all injustice—its existence in the mere, but necessary, sense of time, which His will created and prolonged.

This is the more objective side; there is the more subjective. Man chooses, in most of his experiences, between the rack and the Cross, between a prolonged lesser and a shorter but greater pain. I do not wish to seem here to become rhetorical; I do not under-rate the great and pure beauties which are presented and revealed to us, the virtue and value of fidelity, the appearance of a new kind of goodness where sometimes the old seems to have been exhausted. Yet it is also true that a kind of death attends us all everywhere. Our best knowledge is dimmed with boredom or darkened by destruction. "A mist goes up from the ground" or an earthquake shakes it. A languor and a reluctance take us as we endure the undestroyed good, or else the demand for its sacrifice preoccupies us. This occurs so often that we feel it to be in the nature of life; this is what life is. Yes then, certainly, this is what Life is. The Cross is the exhibition of Life being precisely that; more—as knowing itself to be precisely that, as experiencing itself as being precisely that. We are relieved—may one say?—from the burden of being naturally optimistic. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together." If we are to rejoice always then it must be a joy consonant with that; we need not—infinite relief!—force ourselves to deny the mere burden of breathing. Life (experience suggests) is a good thing, and somehow unendurable; at least the Christian faith has denied neither side of the paradox. Life found itself unendurable. Romantically multiplying each side as our feelings may propose, we cannot go beyond that realism. Life itself consents to shrink from its own terrors; it concedes to us its utterance of our own prayer: "O not *this*! If it be possible, not *this*!" I am not for a moment equating our sorrows with that; the point is that the sorrow is centrally there. Life itself is acquainted with grief.

And not grief alone. Crucifixion was an obscene thing. It was

revolting not merely because of the torture and the degradation, but also because of the disgust; or rather it is revolting to us—I do not know that it was revolting to those who saw it. They were as accustomed to it as our fathers were to burning and castration or we to many years' imprisonment or to the gallows. It was, however, definitely more spectacularly obscene than the gallows; we can hardly, in the nature of things, realize it so, and even our best efforts tend to make it a little respectable. But then again life, as we know it, is obscene; or, to be accurate, it has in it a strong element of obscenity. Again and again we become aware of a sense of outrage in our physical natures. Sometimes this is aroused by the events of which we read in the papers, but as often by the events which happen to us. The Family, for example, is a sacred and noble thing, but the things that happen in the Family are the result of blood antagonistic to itself. "Love," it is said, "is very near to hate." Without discussing the general truth of that, it may be allowed that where it is so, the hate is often of a particularly virulent and vehement kind.

I take these two qualities—the sorrow and the obscenity—as examples of that dreadful contradiction in our experience of life which is flatly exhibited in the living of life by Life. I am not unaware that it will be said that That which dies on the cross was something a great deal more than Life in any sense in which we understand the word. But I am not now talking of Christian dogma, but of a particular sense of the Cross. "The feeling intellect" of the Faith is a state of a much more advanced nature than anything I can claim to have known.

I say then that the idea of the Cross does, on the one hand, make the idea of justice in God credible; and on the other certifies to us that we are not fools in being conscious of the twisting of all goodness to ignominy. We may (if it may be put so) approach God with that at least cleared up. We are not being unjust to His creation in the distaste we feel for it, nor even in the regret we feel that He allows it to continue. There would be other things to be said were we now discussing the Incarnation as such, but these are the things to be said peculiarly about the Cross. This is what Almighty God, as well as we, found human life to be. We willed it so, perhaps, but then certainly He willed that we should will.

There is, however, more to it than that. There is Easter. It is not possible to separate the idea of Easter from the Cross. Easter is its consequence. But it is a consequence of which many of us

have very little apprehension. There are those who find it easy to look forward to immortality and those who do not. I admit that, for myself, I do not. It is true that the gradual stupefaction of the faculties which normally overcomes a man as he grows older seems to make—if not the idea of immortality more attractive—at least the idea of annihilation less so. Possibly curiosity is the last of one's faculties to be stupefied; possibly the natural egotism which has had a free run in one's life accentuates marvellously the idea of self-preservation as one approaches the apparent end of self-preservation. Possibly one is merely more fussy. Whatever is true, the idea of annihilation is more repellent. But I cannot say I find the idea of immortality, even of a joyous immortality, much more attractive. I admit, of course, that this is a failure of intelligence; if joy is joy, an infinite joy cannot be undesirable. The mere fact that our experience on this earth makes it difficult for us to apprehend a good without a catch in it somewhere, is by definition, irrelevant. It may, however, make the folly more excusable.

Easter, however, is not only a consequence of the Cross; it is also almost an accident of it. It followed the Cross, but also it began in the Cross. I say "in" rather than "on," for by the time it began He had become, as it were, the very profoundest Cross to Himself. That certainly He had always been prophetically, but now the exploration of His prophecies was complete. The Cross was He and He the Cross. His will had maintained, or rather His will in His Father's will had maintained, a state of affairs among men of which physical crucifixion was at once a part and a perfect symbol. This state of things He inexorably proposed to Himself to endure; say, rather, that from the beginning He had been Himself at bottom both the endurance and the thing endured. This had been true everywhere in all men; it was now true of Himself apart from all men; it was local and particular. The physical body which was His own means of union with matter, and was in consequence the very cause, centre, and origin of all human creation, was exposed to the complete contradiction of itself. It would be perhaps too ingenious a fancy, which in these things above all is to be avoided, to say that actual crucifixion is a more exact symbol of His suffering than any other means of death. It is, however, with peculiar explicitness in the physical category what His other agony was in the spiritual (so, for a moment, to differentiate them). He was stretched, He was bled, He was nailed, He was thrust into, but not a bone of Him was broken. The dead wood drenched with

the blood, and the dead body shedding blood, have an awful likeness; the frame is doubly saved. It was the Cross which sustained Him, but He also sustained the Cross. He had, through the years, exactly preserved the growth of the thorn and of the wood, and had indued with energy the making of the nails and the sharpening of the spear; say, through the centuries He had maintained vegetable and mineral in the earth for this. His providence overwatched it to no other end, as it overwatches so many instruments and intentions of cruelty then and now. The Cross therefore is the express image of His will; it depends in its visible shape and strength wholly on Him.

In the moment, as it were, of the final so-near-to-identity of Himself and His wooden Image, He spoke. He said: "It is finished." It is at that moment that Easter began. It is not yet Easter; the Deposition has not yet taken place. He speaks, while yet He can, while He is not yet as speechless as the wood, and He announces the culmination of that experience. Life has known absolutely all its own contradiction. He survives; He perfectly survives. His—I dare not call it victory—is not afterwards, but then. His actual death becomes almost a part of His Resurrection, almost what Patmore called the death of the Divine Mother, a "ceremony." Not so, for the ceremony was itself a work and a discovery, but then proper ceremonies are so; they achieve, as this does. The joy of His self-renewed knowledge perfectly exists, and His Resurrection is (in His Father and Origin) at His own decision and by His own will. It is the will of His unalterable joy which, having absorbed, exists.

This moment of consummation is therefore related to man's inevitable demand that all things should be justified in the moment that they happen. We must perhaps, joyously or reluctantly, consent to leave the knowledge of that justification till afterwards, but we must be willing to believe that it is now. Or better, that the result is neither here nor there, neither now nor then, and yet both here and there, both now and then. There has indeed been much admiration, much gratitude, much love, that God should be made like us, but then there is at least equal satisfaction that it is an unlike us who is so made. It is an alien Power which is caught and suspended in our very midst. "Blessed be God," said John Donne, "that He is God only and divinely like Himself." It is that other kind of existence which here penetrates our hearts, and is at all points credibly justified by our justice. The



supreme error of earthly justice was the supreme assertion of the possibility of justice. In His mortal life He never pretended, in making all His impossible and yet natural demands, that He judged as we do. The parable of the labourers, the reply to James and John, are alien from our equality; and so in the incredible comment on Judas—"it were good for that man if he had not been born," and who caused Him to be born? Who maintained his life up to and in that awful less than good? It is in the Gospels that the really terrifying attacks on the Gospel lie.

He was not like us, and yet He became us. What happened there the Church itself has never seen, except that in the last reaches of that living death to which we are exposed He substituted himself for us. He submitted in our stead to the full results of the Law which is He. We may believe He was generous if we know that He was just. By that central substitution, which was the thing added by the Cross to the Incarnation, He became everywhere the centre of, and everywhere He energized and re-affirmed, all our substitutions and exchanges. He took what remained, after the Fall, of the torn web of humanity in all times and places and not so much by a miracle of healing as by a growth within it made it whole. Supernaturally He renewed our proper nature. By so doing, it is true, He re-doubled, at least within the Church, our guilt and our distress. When He had made hope a virtue He had prevented it from being a natural habit. In all failures of love there is left to us only a trust in His work; that is what we call "faith," a kind of quality of action. It is, however, a trust in what is already done. Not only His act, but all our acts, are finished so. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means precisely that at any moment the holy desire is already accomplished—not perhaps in the sense that we desire it, but in the sense that He wills it. It is finished; we too do but play out the necessary ceremony.

As in bombings from the air, cancer, or starvation, for instance? Yes, I suppose so; if at all, then certainly in those examples. The Church (of which He seems to have had a low opinion) is His choice, but nature was His original choice, and He has a supreme fidelity. It is, in fact, that fidelity which causes Him to maintain His creation and to die for His creation and to renew His creation. It may seem that little has been here said about our salvation through His sacrifice. That would not be quite true, for all that has been said concerns our salvation. Our salvation is precisely our reconciliation, to nature and to the Church—not that they are



so separate; our reconciliation both to Him and to our present state, both at once and both in one. We are, by that august sacrifice, compelled to concede to Him the propriety of our creation. I do not know that anything greater could be demanded or done. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." We know that very well. But the General Thanksgiving ("general thanksgiving"—incredible words!) goes further. "We bless Thee for our creation, preservation . . . for the means of grace and the hope of glory." It seems that nothing less will do. We are then required to do it because He does; it is at once a duty and a relief. Let Him do it for us, for at least the Life in Him is not separate from our life: we are allowed to repose in His blessing of Himself, and to confirm ours by virtue of His blessing. The duty and the relief do not remain themselves; they are changed as nature is changed, as the elements in the Eucharist are changed. In the Eucharist He withdraws all into His Resurrection, because the Resurrection is in the sacrifice. This is not the place, however, to discuss the Eucharist. It is sufficient to say that there, as everywhere, to be able to bless is to be in a state of salvation, in a state of goodwill towards Him and all His creation, in a state of love. Only beatitude can properly bless, as only Love can love. In so far as we desire to bless, we are at least believers in a state of salvation now.

Our own guilt, natural or supernatural, is only manifested so. We can hardly be in a state of guilt towards something which is not in bearable relations with us. The Crucifixion, restoring those relations, restores very much more. It permits repentance because it enables us to mean something by sin. Without that act, the infliction on us of something terribly like injustice would have made nonsense of any injustice on our side. He restores Himself to us as God with all the qualities of God merely by being content not to be nothing but God. God can pardon, but pardon is only half pardon unless it is desired; the supreme life of it is precisely in the mutual act. There is no lovingness, mortal or divine, which does not, for its mutual quality, depend on that sacrifice of Himself. "Others he saved; himself he cannot save." If He had saved Himself, it seems, He could not have saved others; He did it by His power affirming, in the Crucifixion, its own lack of power. He maintains us, by His will, in the state of sin in which we are; by His act He makes free to us the knowledge of that state, and of that issuing in Him.

"O fools and slow of heart, *ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and entered into his glory?" Yes; He ought. He said so: "The Son of Man *must* . . ." But then also He did. If the glory on which He insists, at such a cost, seems intolerable to us, if the exposition of release from our unhappy state seems as unbearable as the state itself, so that we cannot bear the only alternative to what we already cannot bear, at least that, after all, is the situation; it is He. We may be bold to say that He knows Himself as well as we know Him; after the Cross we can believe that He knows Himself not only as He does, but as we do. In the finishing of that knowledge a little cloud of fresh good arises, the first sense of that cloud into which He was received when He ascended. Whole, He died; whole, He rose; whole, He went up. Not the least gift of the Gospel is that our experiences of good need not be separated from our experiences of evil, need not and must not be. In time they generally are, and even when they are not they are apt to seem unrelated. The authority which the good in our experience seems to have over us, unlike the evil, however much less than the evil it seems to be, is united with that other authority of the God who endured His own. It is the Christian religion that makes the Christian religion possible. Existence itself is Christian; Christianity itself is Christian. The two are one because He is, in every sense, life, and life is He. It is to that, in the Triune Unity, that there is ascribed, beyond all hope, to that only Omnipotence, as is most justly due, all might, majesty, dominion, and power.

CHARLES WILLIAMS.



# 15

C. J. WRIGHT

**P**ERSONAL statements—such as are demanded by the title—are not easy to make. It is difficult for any man to understand himself, for the subject and the object of the understanding are one, not two. The eye cannot see itself. For that reason, if we would really know what “the Cross,” or any other religious symbol, *means* to any man we are likely to get nearer the truth by living with him than by reading his studied statements. The human mind can be so “desperately wicked” that it can love to deceive *itself* about what it really thinks and believes: to say nothing about its love to reassure others with its orthodoxy, or impress them with its cleverness. A man’s real faith is seldom that *eidōlon* of it which is expressed to himself or to others by his words. As a man thinketh *in his heart* of the Cross, so is its *meaning* to him: and the clue to what he is really thinking *in his heart* is the whole tone and temper of his unstudied or spontaneous life. What the Cross *means* to any man is not the speculative theory of it which commends itself to one part of his mind, but the entire faith in it by which he lives.

This is not to deny the truly human necessity to think things together as well, or as ill, as the demands, on the one hand, and the tools, on the other, of one’s speculative intellect may permit. Not all are conscious of the same demands, and not all are provided with the same kind of reasoning tools. Nevertheless, we *live* by what we really believe. Such a criterion of belief, it is obvious, makes the most searching demands upon the intellectual and moral integrity of any author.

One other introductory word requires to be said. That such a question to one’s personal faith can be fittingly asked involves, as it seems to me, two quite fundamental points—focal points—round which my own mind moves and from which my own faith can never escape. The first is, that the Cross can be nothing to me apart from its “meaning” for me—interpreting the word “meaning,” of course, in the total, or inclusive, sense already described. Sometimes it has been said that “it is the Cross itself that matters, not any theory we may hold about it.” Such a statement may be

but a valuable reminder that one's speculative theory may be a quite inadequate expression of one's living and controlling faith. But it *may* imply that there is a "saving efficacy" in the Cross as a historical event, in and by itself, apart from our interpretation of it or faith in it. No "fact," however, can even be called a fact apart from its "meaning" for some personal consciousness. Without *some* interpretation of its meaning no one can be said to have any belief in the Cross: and to say that men have found the Cross to "save" them does not mean that it has done something for them *willy nilly*, but that through their whole faith in it they have found liberation and enlightenment. The second point is—and this necessarily follows from the first—that the question is unavoidably individual and personal. This is not to deny that the witness of the Christian community of all the centuries is more likely to cast fuller light on the "mystery" of the Cross than the experience of one Christian: nor does it mean that any Christian's personal faith in the Cross has been reached independently. Nevertheless, "the right of private judgment" and the peremptory requirement of personal faith are involved in the very conditions of all knowledge. What we call "traditional beliefs," or ecclesiastical "dogmas," did not descend ready-made from the sky: they had first to be seen or believed in the inviolable sanctuary of a personal consciousness: and, throughout, this conditioning factor has been, and must remain, an inescapable criterion—though, of course, not the *ground*—of their truth. No community can be said to *believe* any doctrine: the "group mind" is, to exact thought, a contradiction in terms, for it takes a person to think, to feel and to will.

It is interesting, and significant, to recall at this point that the Church has never formulated anything in the nature of a "dogma" of the Atonement, or theory of the Cross. Right from the Apostolic period there has, of course, been a continuous tradition which has, in various ways, associated the Cross with man's "salvation": but no one elaborated theory of the Cross has ever been set forth as its "catholic" meaning, in the sense that the "Trinity" has been set forth as the "catholic" meaning of the Christian doctrine of God, or the Chalcedonian Definition of the "Two Natures in One Person" as the "catholic" meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation. To individual thinkers such as Paul, Origen, Anselm, Abelard, Grotius, to name but a few—and not to Councils—we have to go for anything in the nature of a philosophy of the Cross. It was a sound instinct, I believe, which guided the Church in this

omission. The history of the "meaning" of the Cross is to be found in the lives of the seers and the saints—and only there. Like apologetic "proofs" of the existence of God, "theories" of the Cross often seem to be the rationalisation of the author's non-belief, the cloak of an impoverished faith. He who has lost the power to smile at his own theories and dogmas has, unwittingly probably, put his own little finite self on the throne of his worship and speculation. The set and determined face which some of our philosophies of faith present to the world remind one curiously, yet irresistibly, of Europe's sceptical modern dictators in the days when they posed for their photographs.

To keep to the personal confession of faith required by the title, the Cross is *the* symbol—to borrow Paul's language—of "my Gospel." That Gospel, or Good Tidings, is a message about *the Nature of God* and a message about *His will for man*. It is a message which arises out of, as it has only meaning within, the whole mystery of personal existence in this world of time and space. It is a "Gospel," because it is the only finally-satisfying answer to the problem of evil and the clue to the remedy for human sin. It is "finally-satisfying" because it is a message which relates the toil and the suffering, the hopes and the fears, the virtue and the sin, of humanity to the nature and purpose of the Living God—a God who is neither arbitrary Cosmic Dictator nor impersonal Pantheistic Absolute, but the Holy, Loving Father who ever seeks by His Spirit to restore the disobedient children of men to the fellowship, in co-operative purpose and endeavour, of "sons."

### *The Historic Cross*

It is necessary to remember that the meaning which the symbol of the Cross bears has its source in a historical Cross on which Jesus the Christ was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judæa. Crosses of one kind or another are agelong religious symbols; and the variety of meaning which they have borne is most arrestingly illustrated by the fact that the Swastika, or Crooked Cross, is the symbol of many to-day who would banish the Christian Cross, "the symbol," as they regard it, "of morons and idiots." Crosses dating from the later Stone Age have been found in most parts of Europe, and are reminders of crude forms of Nature worship and of pagan ethics which humanity, with pain and travail, has been seeking to leave behind. Conceptions of



religion which are not merely non-Christian, but often in essence directly opposed to it, have been, and still are, symbolised by a cross.

What the Christian symbol of the Cross means is directly related to the death of the historical Jesus "without a city wall." No Christian, therefore, can wish to isolate it from its historical context. It was the death of Jesus on a Cross which has given significance to a symbol that now focuses at a burning point the whole tragedy and glory, meaning and goal, of human history.

The meaning of the historical Cross of Calvary springs out of the life and ministry of the historic Jesus. No interpretation of this Cross is possible without an interpretation of the Mission of Jesus and of the knowledge of God He possessed. As we conceive that Mission and that knowledge we shall conceive His Cross. The divergent theories of the Cross have their origin in divergent interpretations of His Mission, of the kind of knowledge of God He possessed, and—as necessarily involved therein—of the kind of God He revealed. Should the day ever come when Christians are agreed on these fundamental issues there will cease to be radical disagreement on theologies or philosophies of Atonement.

Like every other fact of human history the Cross on Calvary's hill is no isolated or discontinuous event, but one inwoven into an indivisible pattern by the motivations of the actors severally and jointly responsible. Transcendental theories can only be erected on the foundation of the historical facts. Some readings of the Passion of our Lord suggest a transcendental drama transacted before-hand in the warring mind of God and then played on the stage of human history by puppets incapable of being other than they were and doing other than they did. In the endeavour to prove that the Cross was "necessary" in the transcendental sense it was evacuated both of the tragic evils of men which perpetrated it, and of the moral sublimity of Him who unflinchingly "accepted" it. The story told us in the Gospels, however, is of what happened in history, not of what was transacted in some theoretical "meta-history." There we read of a real redemptive Life, lived by a real Person confronting the assaults of real people. And throughout the Gospel story it is made unmistakably clear that the key to the Cross, as to the hostility that accomplished it, lay in the Mission and Message of Jesus.

Our Lord occasioned, by the Message about God He sought throughout His ministry to declare, and by the Mission for men He



sought in all His words and works to fulfil, the increasing opposition of the religious rulers of the country. He spoke with so intimate, so unhesitating, so axiomatic, an assurance of God as Father that He challenged of necessity the traditional statements and standards of belief in God represented by Scribes, Pharisees, Zealots, and Sadducees. "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes," who taught from "authorities," carefully preserved, codified, standardised, and sanctioned, by the "experts" of the religious institution. With His "Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time—but I say unto you", a prophetic and regal claim was cast divisably among the competing vested interests which had been created to sustain and prolong traditional ideas, systems, and cults, whether political or religious. With His "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; wherefore the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath", He startled all institutionalists with the principle which indwells every prophetic revolt, every seer's insight, and every artistic creation. For to Jesus the moral and spiritual well-being of man took precedence over everything created by it and for it. Thus the freedom of each true son of man was proclaimed and all men's infallibilities challenged. With His "Out of the heart of men" all things evil proceed, He stripped of its externalism every unbending fanaticism to the letter, and from every hedonistic self-righteousness its altruistic cloak. With His "I came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly," He proclaimed a positive conception of the religious life to which all merely negative commandments are but temporary pedagogic method, and an ideal of its comprehensiveness in which all particularisms are transcended, and all sacred interludes merged. With His "A greater thing than Solomon is here," "A greater thing than the Temple is here"—namely, the Kingdom incarnate in Himself—He claimed that the trust and obedience of the Son, and of all true sons, of the Father means more to God than all man's traditional wisdom and all his consecrated edifices. In all this—but a few illustrations from the multitude which crowd the pages of the Gospels—it is clear that Jesus refused to abate the peremptory nature of His insight into the Divine Father's nature and will, though vividly aware of the "profit" to be gained from acquiescence in the beliefs and cults deemed necessary for the safety and preservation of Scribal, Pharisaic and Sadduccaic religion.

All this was "blasphemy" to religious and ecclesiastical

authority—the real charge brought against Him at His trial, though subtly camouflaged for the civil authority under the guise of “treason.” This disguise, though penetrated by Pilate, was sufficiently specious and disturbing to intimidate the Roman procurator into assent to the crucifixion of Jesus at the hands of his soldiers. Let it never be forgotten that, while Jesus could not have been nailed on the Cross without the order of Pilate, the real cause lay deep within a Mission and Message which stirred the fanatical and relentless opposition of men who regarded themselves as custodians of a traditional Faith and of a sacrosanct Order. It is a tragic and infinitely poignant irony that history has in every subsequent age been repeating itself; in the very name of the Crucified, the same blind and persecuting homage to the Letter of Final Dogma and Static Institution has been paid at the foot of His Cross. “When the light that is in thee is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

The challenge, however, which the Mission and Message of Jesus presented to the ruling men in Church and State of His day was but incidental. Our Lord’s “motive” was not to assail, but to assert, not to deny but to affirm, not to destroy but to “fulfil.” What we call a man’s “motive” is his “final intention”: as, for example, the “motive” of our young heroic spitfire pilots is not the destruction of enemy bombers but the downfall of a system of evil and the preservation of truth, justice, freedom—the very life-blood of any “peace” worthy of the name—in the earth. There is no construction without destruction; but the new construction was the flaming passion in the soul of our Lord. This He called by an old name—the “Kingdom” or “Rule” of God, the Divine Father. It is a Kingdom of “the saints of the Most High,” which by His own unique knowledge of the Father and unfaltering obedience to the King of kings He claimed to incarnate.

The life of every member of this “Kingdom” is, thus, an ellipse with two foci. The two points to which he is equally firmly held, hidden deep in the uncodifiable depths of the free spirit, are the trustful insight into the Divine Father’s nature and the co-operative obedience to the Divine King’s will. That nature is one of ever-flowing Grace, eternally-operative Holy Love. “My Father worketh hitherto,” said Jesus. God is no Immutable and Impassible Prime Mover, Himself unmoved as Cosmic Dictator in the heavens, beholding the tragic spectacle of human history unfolding relentlessly under the control of self-operating “laws” of His

own creation. Nor is He an Abstract Name—the Absolute—coined to cover the whole process of the universe as such, and which thus embraces in an Unmoral Entity what we call Evil as well as what we call Good. The two symbols which least inadequately describe Him are “Father” and “King,” the first ruling out the Deistic Absentee Potentate, the second the Pantheistic Immanent Abstraction. To describe, in vivid parable and allusive symbol, the nature of the Father-King was the central theme of all our Lord’s teachings; as to translate it into truthful, righteous, humble, gracious and self-sacrificial works was the motive and substance of His whole ministry. His truthfulness showed itself in his penetration of sophistries, in His quick and passionate indignation before all hypocrisies, in His sympathy for and appreciation of the common people who, we are told, heard Him gladly. His righteousness was a flame from which evil men retired abashed, and to which just men were drawn for light and warmth. His humility was that of a Servant of the servants of men. His grace was seen in His whole reconciling ministry, redeeming men from real sins and so restoring them to the fellowship of the Father. His whole life was self-sacrificial, reaching its consummation in the “acceptance” of what is sometimes called an “untimely” death, meted out to Him by evil men as He unfalteringly trod the path of His Mission, and yet known by Him in faith to be “the cup” which it was the Father’s will He should drink.

This—briefly and inadequately—is the meaning of The Historical Cross to me. It focuses at a central point the whole Life and teaching of our Lord, and is the one inevitable symbol to us to-day of Him who was both essentially Human and essentially Divine.

### *The Eternal Cross*

The meaning, however, of the Cross on “a green hill far away,” as the meaning of the Person who died upon it, is only rightly and truly seen in the light of a faith which relates History to Eternity. Every event in History took place at a point of Time and Space. But what is “Time” and what is “Space”? To try to say what anything *is*, means that we try to say what its *essential nature* is, and not just how, and when, and where, it happened. Our concern, in other words, is with Reality, not just with temporal existence, or “happenedness.”

The Cross which stood on the hill of Calvary for a few days

round about 30 a.d., and has long ages ago been disintegrated into the dust of the earth, focuses, as I have said, the tragedy and the glory, the meaning and the goal of human history.

*Tragedy* is here, for the Best of the sons of men is the victim of the foulest crime—a single crime which was the fruit of a thousand secret betrayals of truth, evasions of duty, prostitutions of righteousness, exploitations of religion, in as many human minds. That tragedy runs through all history. It is the tragedy of the torn and divided spirit of man, in which light is ever contending with darkness, truth with falsehood, holiness with uncleanness, love with hate. No one, thinking to-day of the evils of the men responsible for the crime of Calvary, will wish—if he has the sincerity to confront his own divided spirit—to thank God, like the Pharisee of the Gospel story, that he is not as other men. Rather, he will wish to confess their sins as, in a measure, his own. The Cross is the symbol of the eternal tragedy of humanity, and makes manifest for all time the essential nature of sin.

*Glory* is here—in its Biblical sense of “manifested excellence”—for within a single truly and fully human spirit darkness is fully mastered, falsehood wholly slain, unrighteous hate entirely subdued. As the Johannine evangelist dramatically expresses this victory in the soul of Jesus—“The prince of this world cometh and has nothing in me,” nothing, that is, to which he can subtly and speciously appeal, no unguarded corner of the mind through which the fortress can be taken. And surely, few, if any, looking at that sublimest victory, that impregnable fortress, will refuse its challenge to an uttermost sincerity, will fail to see that this is what frail and sinful men can, and ought to, by the grace of God, become like. The “glory” of Jesus was nothing less than this victory. For it revealed the essential nature of man, as God meant man to be: it is, therefore, both a Human and a Divine glory, Human in its seat and prophecy, Divine in its source and purpose. Son of God is also Son of man: and He in whom the two indivisibly and inseparably meet is the “Great Exemplar” of all His brethren. In that sense, the Glory of the Cross of Calvary is the glory of all the men of our tragic history.

Further, the *Meaning* of human history is here—that is, its final meaning. History as we read of it in all the records that have come down to us—whether in buildings, customs, laws, institutions, systems of thought, or in the written records of man—is the story of agelong conflict. In all art man has been seeking to

express an ideal Beauty, dimly seen and therefore partly hidden in the depths of his spirit: for that reason, all art—whether painting, sculpture, architecture, music, or writing—is the issue of a tension between what is seen and what is hidden, or between the actual and the ideal. In the whole history of knowledge, or science, there is a similar endeavour to ascertain Truth, dimly beckoning as a final vision but shrouded in mystery: for that reason, all human science—whether natural or metaphysical—reveals the conflict between darkness and light, the partial and the complete, the finite and the infinite. This tension is the meaning of the perpetual action and reaction, thesis and antithesis, in human thought, as different minds, and aspects of the same mind, swing pendulum-like between seeming opposites: hence Metaphysics and Positivism, Idealism and Realism, Theology and Humanism—the first of these contraries representing the dim vision of final mystery, the second the experienced certitude of what is here and now. This same tension is the meaning of the moral history of humanity. Man has gradually awakened to the claim of a Perfect Goodness, of what he ought to be and to do. This awakening, as in the realms of art and of knowledge, has come through the mediation of outstanding men of insight and fidelity—a Moses, a Jeremiah, a Socrates, men who in their several spheres “nothing common did, or mean.” Such are the peaks of moral insight and achievement, beckoning their fellows onward, and upwards. These moral heights were not thrown up, like the Himalayas from the plain of upper India, by compulsive and externally-operating forces: they represent real struggle and achievement within the depths of human spirits conscious of right and wrong, of good and better, of better and best. They were moral, not mechanical, happenings. The heritage of these achievements has been, as the issue of another agelong tension between the individual and society, transmitted to the race of men. Each new individual has to fight his own moral battle; but the kind of battle he has to fight has been, in large part, determined by the fidelities and infidelities of those who have preceded him. It is this latter fact that the traditional theological dogma of “original sin” sought inadequately to state. In consequence of such human solidarity, no finite mind can compute blame, or apportion responsibility. “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” Nevertheless, the choice of the children remains, and on its issue will depend the new spheres of moral conflict to be waged by those



who come after. Thus the moral history of humanity is a chequer-board of heroism and cowardice, a road which winds uphill and downhill, a pattern inwoven with the self-seeking and the sacrificial deeds of all the ages.

Now the Cross of Calvary is the symbol of the Final Meaning of this sublime and sordid human history. And it is so because it is indwelt by the redeeming Purpose and Grace of the Living God uniquely incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Both the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and of Redemption—two doctrines which are as inseparable as Self-revelation and Self-sacrifice, Sympathy and Suffering—are rooted in the nature of the Eternal Father as He stands confronted by His children who rebel against His purposes. All the struggle and the pain of the created universe has meaning only in the light of eternity. For which reason the hall-mark of the prophets and the seers of humanity is that they see all things *sub specie aeternitatis*. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," said Paul. "The light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness never mastered it," wrote John of that same agelong conflict. The Christian message of the Incarnation declares that God is no absentee, no mere spectator, of so tragic an issue to His creative purpose. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was Divine": that is, from all eternity it has been God's nature to reveal Himself and to act redemptively. The Divine Revealing and Redemptive action in history has been no "afterthought": it may be more truly called "fore-thought"—though all such words of time and space are inadequate to the *Eternal* Purpose and Will of God. The Grace of God manifest in creation is both Self-revealing and Self-limiting. The universe is both the "garment" by which He is manifested and the self-imposed fetter to His will. Even as an artist reveals his mind by his works, which yet, without our insight into his invisible thought, may be a barrier to the revelation. The analogy is true as far as it goes, but it is inadequate: for the Divine Father whose grace is the source of creation is livingly operative within it, seeking to overcome the resisting medium by enlightenment and succour. Yet that enlightenment is never enforced, as that succour is never imposed. The willing Giver must be met by the willing receiver. For the conception of a "grace" that is "irresistible" is of no "Divine" Grace; rather, it is a conception borrowed from inanimate mechanism and raised to the *n*th degree by an alliance



with the conception of a Cosmic Dictator. The alliance, however, no more makes it "Divine" Grace than does Nazi invasion of small nations like Czecho-Slovakia make the resultant temporary subjugation a "gift" to those nations.

The redemptive activity of the Living God in all history, uniquely incarnate when Perfect Morality was wedded to Perfect Spirituality in Jesus Christ, has been revealed in every disinterested search for truth, in every thought of holiness, in every sacrificial deed. It has been expressed in words by artist and thinker, by prophet and martyr.

*"The heroes and the saints  
Thy messengers became;  
And all the lamps that guide the world  
Were kindled at Thy flame."*

It has been nobly uttered in the old poem:

*"Many man for Christes love  
Was martired in Romaine,  
Er any Christendom was knowe there,  
Or any cros honoured."*

Thus the Historic Cross is the one fitting symbol of the Eternal Cross hid in the heart of creation, as, indeed, in the very nature of God. This is the inmost meaning of the apocalyptic vision of the seer of Patmos: "And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." The "book of life" was called, by a similar insight, that "of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world."

Finally, the *Goal* of human history is here—that is, the potency and presage of a Consummation, whose "times and seasons" and all other incidental accompaniments we cannot know, but whose essential nature has been already revealed to those who have the eyes to see. The Crucifixion of Jesus cannot be sundered from His Resurrection, the death that was accepted from the Life that was manifest anew. It was the victory manifest in the Cross that became known to the disciples through the Risen Presence. Thus to the Church, as to Jesus Himself prior to His violent death, the Cross was itself His "glorification": not His defeat but His

triumph: the end of one chapter in human history—"It is finished"—but the beginning of the next: "Behold I make all things new." It was this assurance of faith, mediated through the Victorious Cross of Jesus, which found expression in the vivid symbolism of the New Testament and Credal statement, "He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father." For the essential truth of the symbolism is that the consummation of the purpose of the Eternal Father, Self-manifest in the Incarnate Son, is sure. Fittingly, the day of the Cross is called "Good" Friday—Good, inherently Good.

The consummation is sure, but it is "not yet." In days of what men call "catastrophe"—when once again, through a million betrayals of truth, righteousness and love, evil men, exploiting both the base hopes and ignoble fears of a self-styled "Master-Race" in the interests of a Kingdom of this world for themselves, have thrust the world into a war as unavoidable to moral men as was the way of the Cross to Jesus—what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote is clear: "Now we see not yet all things subjected to Him." "But," as the same unknown writer added, "we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."

The Eternal Kingdom is manifest here and now in all who love truth more than certitude, righteousness more than "peace," the flaming passion of an active, holy love more than the brooding inertia of a self-righteous withdrawal from life's conflict. When it is consummated—a consummation as certain as the Eternity of God—it will be compacted of the aspirations, thoughts and deeds which have inherent in them the quality of eternity. Its members will be the self-spending children of Light, and Holiness and Love. Its symbol is ever the Cross—not the Crooked Cross of Dominion, but the Eternal Cross of Service.

•  
*"No new world like the old we need;  
One thing suffices—one alone,  
A garnered world-harvest from seed  
The wounded Hands of Christ have sown.*

*"No earthly Paradise avails,  
No Eldorado of the West;  
The Spirit's Breath must fill the sails  
Who seek the Highlands of the Blest.*

*"By stripes is healing wrought, and scars  
Point ever to a central Sun;  
He flies the conquering flag, whose scars,  
Transfigured, speak of Victory won.*

*"O Royal Heart, Thy Kingdom come!  
All else may change; all else may go:  
Not eastward, westward, is our Home,  
But onward, upward:—even so!*

*"One Sign alone is love-designed,  
God's Ever-green, the Eternal Rood;  
Happy the home-seekers who find  
Its meaning plain—a world renewed!"*

There can be, however, no *world-renewal* without *individual and personal* renewal. The Cross *saves* us, one by one, as we *accept* it, one by one. But to *accept* the Cross is not to shelter behind it to escape some penalty, or to secure some reward of our worldly or rationalistic conceiving. It is to know that sin is *nothing less than its own penalty*. It is trustfully to receive the Divine Grace which it mediates and to co-operate with the Eternal Purpose which it embodies.

C. J. WRIGHT.

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